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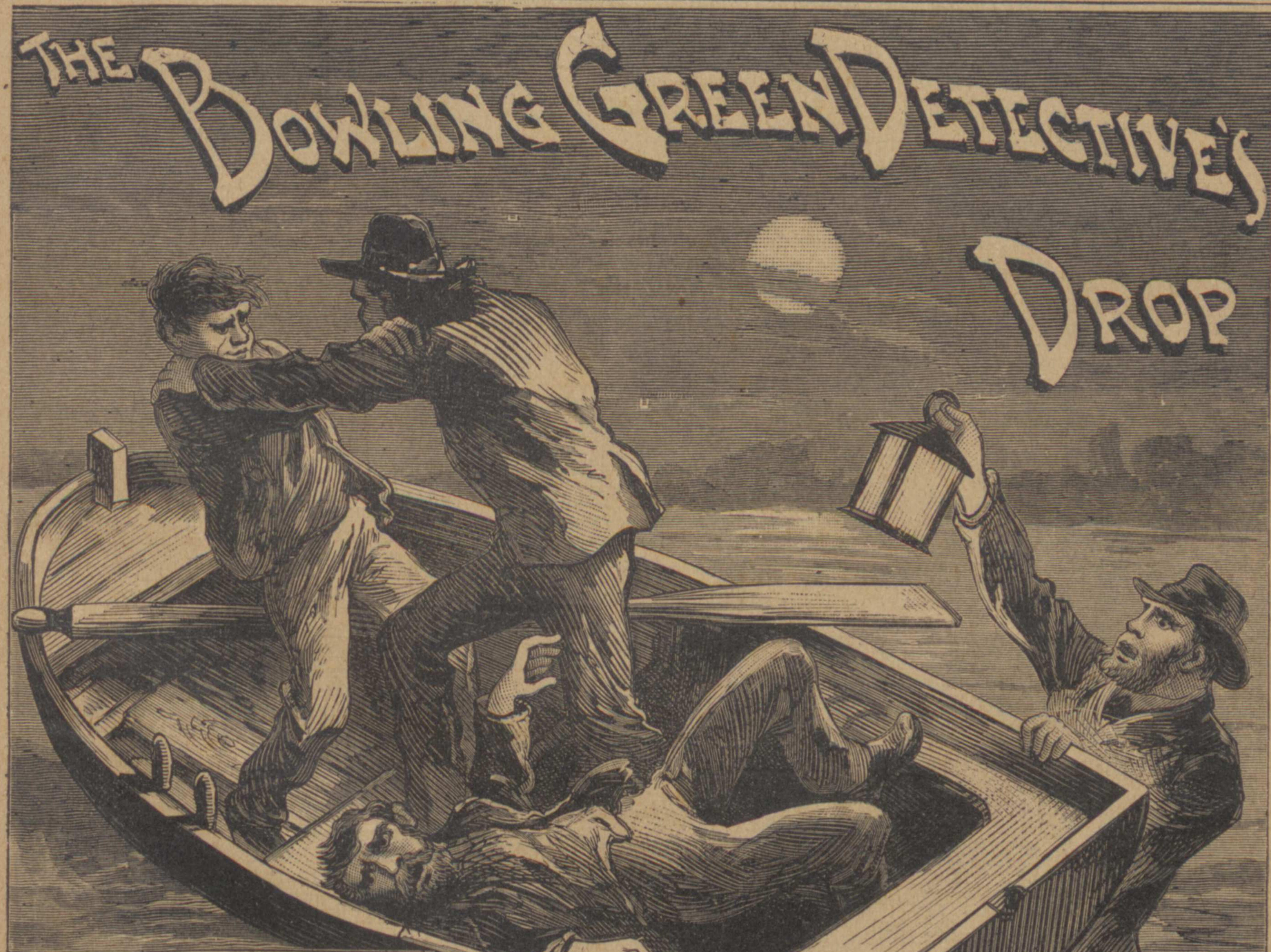
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OR,

LIMERICK LARRY'S BIG BOOM.¹⁵¹⁷

BY J. C. COWDRICK,
AUTHOR OF "BROADWAY BILLY" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

TWO CASES.—NOT ALIKE.

He was not a handsome youth, in fact he was the reverse: but he had an open, honest countenance, with a pair of eyes to match the fair blue of the summer sky.



"BUST HIS BRAINS OUT," BRANNAGAN CRIED, "AND FLING HIM TO THE FISHES!"

Strolling idly along lower Broadway, with his hands deep in his pockets, he was apparently at peace with himself and all the world, and was taking in the sights as he went along singing:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Me heart ye've stolen all away,
Wi'd ye'r rosy cheeks an' dimples,
And eyes like twinklin' stars.
Sure I am in a pickle,
All because ye are so fickle;
Do ye really care a nickel
For that jigger on the cars?"

At that moment the bright look vanished from his face, and a scowl took its place as he glanced at a passing cable car.

"By the token, av dhene aint that same jigger now!" he exclaimed. "Spake av the devil, and he is bound to appear. Look at the wax on his mustache, w'u'd ye! As if he hasn't got twin patches in the sate av his breeches!"

And as the car passed the youth shook his fist at the rather spruce-looking conductor, who was all unconscious of this expression of affection, and the object of this displeasure went on his way, while the street stroller, who had come to a standstill, let his thoughts take shape.

"And that is her Nelson, is it? Sure, it must be the name that has caught her fancy, fur, on me soul, his shape never would! Oi wonder av that is all the name he has, or has he another wan before or behind to it that is even more high-sounding nor that wan? Oi would loike to paste him once fur luck, sure as me name is Larry!"

He soon strolled on, his hands still deep in his pockets, and the look on his face boded ill for his rival. He whistled a little, and presently broke out singing again as his muse ran away with him for another prance in the foothills of Parnassus, to this effect:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
This is phwat Oi have to say—
Ye have hurteted me feelings
Wi'd the way Oi've seen ye flirt;
But yure Nelson will regret it,
Fur av he does upset it,
You can bet that he will get it
Phwere his collar fits his shirt!"

"Hello! Loony! What's that you are singing about? What is the matter with you to-day, my lad?"

"Phwat is the matter wi'd me, Mister Murphy? Sure, dhene is enough the matter, and av Oi mate dhat thin-legged gossoon phwat rings up fares on that car just beyant, he will hear somethin' drap, you bet!"

"Why, what has he been doing to you, Larry?"

"Well, it is enough he has been doing, d'ye moind. It is thryng to cut me out from me best gurrel he is!"

"That is bad enough, truly; but, if she wants him let her have him, and maybe it will be a good riddance for you. I know plenty of men who wish they had been cut out."

"That will do, Mister Murphy. You don't know Kitty Callaway, or you wouldn't be afther saying that, no more ye would. She is the swatest gurrel that ever stood in two shoes, and Oi am bettin' me hat on that same. Av ye was to see her it would turn yure head."

"The same as it has turned yours, eh?" with a light laugh.

"Av me head is turned me heart isn't, Mister Murphy, and av dhat gossoon av a strap-puller don't drop out he is goin' to get hurted!"

"Well, I don't blame you, my lad; I have never been afflicted that way myself, so I don't know much about it. I am an old bachelor, and likely to remain one, I guess. Enough of that; have you succeeded in striking a job yet?"

"Never a job can I get at all at all,

Mister Murphy. All the same, it is greatly obliged Oi am to you fur the help ye have tried to give me."

"And I am sorry it has not amounted to more, my lad."

"Begorra, so am I!"

"Well, keep a stiff upper lip, and everything will come out lovely after a while. Where were you going?"

"Oh! just takin' a walk about the town, dhat was all, sor."

"I will keep my eyes open, Larry, and if I see any opening anywhere, or hear of a chance, I will put you onto it. But who is this Kitty Callaway you seem to be so taken with?"

"Sure, she is a lass that sells poseys just up the strate here a pace, and she is a posey hersel' by the same token!"

"I will judge of your taste the first time I see her."

So they parted. The man went on down Broadway, while the youth continued his stroll in the opposite direction.

"A foine gentleman is Mister Murphy," the lad muttered to himself. "He is as foine a mon as ye could foind in a day's walk, so he is; and av anybody could find me a job he ought to be the wan, seeing that he is a detective."

Which was true. Horace Murphy was the professional popularly known as the Bowling Green Detective.

He had achieved his first success in connection with some steamship line whose office was on Bowling Green, and from that time had been a popular special for that section.

Just how he had become acquainted with Loony Larry does not matter. Men in his line pick up a varied and numerous acquaintanceship.

And as for Larry, he was a character, decidedly.

He was a native of Limerick, and a typical son of the Emerald Isle, full of keen native wit.

He had been some months in New York, had rapidly acquainted himself with American ways and customs, and had been quick to pick up the current slang.

Being something of a rhymster, the boys with whom he had been thrown in contact had dubbed him Loony Larry. Besides that, he was called the Wild Irish Kid, to which he in no wise objected. He had been quick to make friends, after landing penniless and alone in a strange city.

Detective Murphy continued on to Bowling Green, where he entered the office of one of the principal steamship companies.

"Is Mr. Hedgewood in his private office?" he inquired of a clerk.

"Yes, he is in," was the answer. "Want to see him, Mr. Murphy?"

"Yes; just ask him if he can spare me a little time."

The clerk stepped to the door of a private office, exchanged a few words with the man within, and returning, motioned the detective to enter.

Murphy passed around behind the railing and crossed to the private office, where he entered in his quiet, respectful manner.

"You, Murphy?" asked Mr. Selim Hedgewood, looking up from his desk.

"Yes, sir; I received your note, Mr. Hedgewood, and have come at the earliest possible moment."

"You are always prompt, Murphy. And, the best of it is, we never call on you in vain. When we ask you to do a thing we can rely upon its being done, and usually, pretty soon."

"Well, yes; I have been somewhat lucky, Mr. Hedgewood."

"And now we have another case for you, which will take some little time, perhaps, but which seems to be of unusual importance."

"What is it, Mr. Hedgewood?"

"We have got to find a missing passenger."

"I hope the passenger didn't jump overboard," said Murphy. "I may have a difficult job of it, if he did that."

"Ha, ha! Yes, I should say so. Well, it is for you to learn what became of him, and if you are satisfied that he did get lost overboard we will not require you to recover the body."

"Then I think I may safely undertake the work, Mr. Hedgewood. Please give me the particulars."

"I will do that straightway. A gentleman named Samuel Powers called upon me yesterday to make inquiries concerning a young man named Lawrence Brannagan, supposed to have sailed from Queenstown upon our steamship Atlantic some six months ago, and who has never reached his destination."

"Rather strange."

"Yes, it is strange, indeed; but that is not the strangest part of it. This man Powers hints his belief that foul play of some kind has been done, and if that is the case we want to get at the bottom of the business. We cannot have our reputation sullied by anything of that kind, you know. The passenger list shows no entry of any such passenger, and yet Powers is positive that he sailed."

"Has he any proof of it?"

"Yes, a good deal of circumstantial proof, but nothing positive. You had better go and see him; this is his address. He will tell you all there is to tell; then you can set to work. If you can discover young Brannagan you will put him into possession of a large fortune which is coming to him, but which, otherwise, is to go to a rich uncle here in New York, one Michael Brannagan, who, according to this man Powers's account, is not above suspicion."

CHAPTER II.

A CLEW AND A SPAT.

Detective Murphy, leaving the office, started up Broadway.

He intended to take a car, but running over in his mind the points of the case upon which he was about to begin work, he walked farther than he intended, and did not realize it until a cheery voice hailed him.

"Hello! Mister Murphy!" the voice called. "Stop a little till I spake wi'd ye, av ye plaze."

Murphy looked around, and there was Limerick Larry.

The youth was standing by a little table laden with boutonnieres, behind which was seated a young woman whose complexion rivaled the flowers she was selling.

Detective Murphy took in the situation at a glance. This was the Kitty Callaway about whom he had heard Larry singing, and Larry was paying attention to her to while away time, evidently an agreeable occupation.

Murphy dodged out of the stream of passers-by and approached the stand.

"Mister Murphy," said Larry, proudly, "let me be afther introducin' av ye to Miss Kitty Callaway, the swatest gurrel in all New York, and be the same token no swater would ye be be foindin' in Limerick, Cork, Galway or Dublin, ayther, an' ye took a day's walk around the town. Sure, she is—Och! phwat are ye doin', ye little nixie, ye?"

The young lady had cut short her lov-

er's rapturous strain by flinging a bunch of wet moss in his face.

Murphy had to laugh, but he doffed his hat and said:

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Callaway. Larry has often mentioned your name, always with the greatest respect, and I am convinced that he has a good eye and sound judgment. Let me have a tiny bouquet, please. Larry, I am ready to take back what I said an hour ago; you were right."

The young woman, somewhat confused, was unable to make much of a response.

"Begorra, Oi knowed ye would change yure moind, Mister Murphy," Larry declared. "But, botheration to her! dhat wet moss don't fale wan bit comfortable down me neck, no more it does."

"Then don't be making a gillie of your self!" chided Kitty, spitefully.

The detective selected a bouquet and paid for it, and while he affixed it to the lapel of his coat he remarked:

"You must not blame him, Miss Callaway; there are good grounds for his enthusiasm. But, Larry, if this is the way you are looking for employment I am not surprised you have not found it."

"Dhere, now, Mister Murphy, ye are too rough wi'd me," Larry protested. "Sure, Oi have wellnigh walked the two fate off me, looking fur a job, and whin Oi come along dhis way the temptation to stop a bit and rest me weary bones is more nor Oi can resist."

"Can't you find him something, sir; something that will keep him busy from five in the morning till ten at night?" asked the young woman, as if in earnest.

"I see you are inclined to be rough on him," remarked Murphy.

"I want to be rid of him."

"By the way, Larry," changing the subject, "did you not tell me that you landed in New York about six months ago?"

"Thot same is phwat Oi did, sor."

"What steamship did you come over in?"

"Dhe Atlantic, sor."

"And you sailed from Queenstown?"

"Sure, ye have it down foine, just as Oi tould it to ye, sor."

"I must talk with you again, Larry. I want to learn something about that voyage, if it happened to be the particular trip in which I am interested. By the way, you told me your last name, too, but I have forgotten it."

"Larry O'Keen, sor, and it's from Limerick I'd have ye to know I am come."

"What a name!" exclaimed Kitty, with a snicker.

"Oi know it isn't high-soundin'," retorted Larry, bristling up a little, "but begorra it is as clane and honest as any in Oireland."

"Pray don't have a spat," interposed the detective. "What date did you sail from Queenstown, Larry; do you remember? Was it the last week in January?"

"Phwat a divil ye are at guessin'," cried the Limerick lad. "Oi am sure Oi never said a wurred about the toime. Yis, dhat was it, sor, and the divil's own voyage over it was, too, by the same token."

"Rough, eh?"

"Ye would 'a' thought so, an' ye had been dhere."

"Were you the only passenger who got on board when the stop was made at Queenstown?"

"No; dhere was a young man who said his name was Brannagan, or something loike dhat. But, quare it was, Oi did not set me two eyes onto him wanst afther the ship sailed."

Detective Murphy was decidedly interested now.

He had picked up the trail a good deal sooner than he had hoped, and was likely to get important information right then and there.

"How came you to know what his name was?" the detective made inquiry.

"Sure, he paid me to carry his luggage for him, sor," answered Larry, "and he was free wi'd his tongue."

"How old was he?"

"About me own age, Oi should be thinkin', sor."

"And what became of his luggage? Did you see anything more of that, at any time?"

"Divil a glint had Oi av it at all at all, sor."

"Well, I must be going on, but I want to talk further with you about this matter, Larry. Maybe it will put some money into your pocket, if you can aid me in finding out what became of that passenger."

"Oi am yer shamrock!" exclaimed the boy from Limerick. "Ownly tell me phwat it is Oi am to do, and begorra Oi'll be doin' av it while ye can countin'."

"I will see you later, when we will talk it all over, my lad."

"All roight, sor."

Murphy passed on, and Larry turned to his sweetheart.

"A foine man is Mister Murphy, Kittie," he declared. "Sure, no foiner ever walked the strates av New York. Av ye was stuck on the loikes av him, Kitty, sure Oi couldn't say wan wurrud; but whin it comes to a little bit av a runt av a gossoon dhat rings up fares on a Broadway car, begorra, me blood—"

"There, now, Larry, that is enough," interrupted the young woman, impatiently. "You are jealous, that is all that ails you, and if I want to flirt with Nelson. I am going to do it, and not ask your permission; so, there, now! He is a good deal better looking than you are, and if he is a conductor on a car, that is a good deal better than being a do-nothing on the streets; and you may put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

"All right, Kitty, darlint; cling to your Nelson av ye want to, but, by the great boori-booroo, you can't cling to me at the same toime! Me name is Larry O'Keen, and ye know my address, and— By the same token, phwat is the other half of yure Nelson's name?"

"I never asked him. If you want to know, find out."

"Oi will make it my business. Oi will bet it is Jones, or Smith, or some high-flown name loike dhat. Well, good luck is dance at yure weddin' Oi will! Dhat is dance at pure weddin' Oi will! Dhat is to say, av I don't fall in wi'd yure Nelson before dhat; av Oi do, by the powers av I don't pulverize him! Well, the top av the mornin' to ye."

With that he lifted his hat and turned away, the young woman turning up her nose at him as he did so, and as he went off he sang:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Sure Oi love ye all the day.
Wid yure eyes loike two star diamonds,
And cheeks just loike a rose;
But for Nelson now Oi'm slighted,
Though, before yure troth is plighted,
You can bet that he'll get blighted
Phwere his collar button goes!"

He sang it loudly enough for her to hear, and his pace was slow enough so that she could get every word before he passed out of hearing. The girl blushed more rosy than ever, and passers-by looked at Larry and smiled.

"Yis, begorra!" he exclaimed to himself, as he finished the strain, "he is going to get it in the neck, phwere the chicken got the ax, as the boys say, av he don't

switch off and l'ave my Kitty alone. Sure, it is turned her pretty head he has, wid his waxed mustache and his baboon av a smile; but, Oi'll fix him! By the harp av Tara's av here isn't his car!"

Sure enough, it was the car Larry knew well, on its return trip, and the wild Irish lad stood and watched it with a tinge of green in his eye, while he softly hummed:

"By the bloomin' rod of Aaron,
Wid me two eyes Oi am starin'
At me Kitty's pickled herrin'—
Her jigger on the cars!"

And he continued to watch while the car passed the little flower stand, to see whether the flower girl would notice the conductor or not.

CHAPTER III.

SAMUEL POWERS' STORY.

Detective Murphy boarded a car soon after parting from Larry, and rode for a considerable distance.

When, finally, he alighted, he walked some blocks in another direction, and at last rang the bell of a handsome house, where he inquired for Mr. Samuel Powers, who was at home.

The detective was shown into a small business room on the right of the hall, and presently a man of middle age entered.

"I am Mr. Powers, sir," he announced.

"And I have been sent here by Mr. Selim Hedgewood," informed Murphy.

"Ha!" with live interest immediately. "Then you must be the detective he spoke to me about."

"I presume I am, sir. Mr. Hedgewood mentioned something of the matter in which you are interested, and sent me to get further particulars. I have already learned something of the missing young man."

"Indeed! What have you learned?"

"That a young man named Brannagan certainly did take passage on the Atlantic from Queenstown on the date in question."

"Then my supposition is correct; dollars to cents that it is right! And you may safely set it down for a fact that Michael Brannagan is up to some more of his rascally business here!"

"I have no idea who Michael Brannagan is, sir."

"Just as well for you that you have had no intimate acquaintance with him, I can assure you. He is one of the prime rascals in this city."

"You have a very ill opinion of him, evidently."

"And with good reason. He has robbed me of a clean half of my fortune, and in such a manner that I cannot recover a penny of it. Oh, he is a sly old rat, and as sharp as he is sly."

"Perhaps it is out of revenge that you are taking up the matter in which you are now interested?"

"Exactly, sir, exactly. You have hit it just right. At the same time, if what I suspect is true, then it is a matter that some one should take up and sift to the bottom."

"Well, let me know more about it."

"There were two brothers, I believe, in Ireland—a gentleman's sons—one being Michael, the rascal I have mentioned, and the other Antrim. Michael came to this country, Antrim remaining in Ireland, having inherited a vast landed estate there. Antrim died, leaving a son named Lawrence, who would fall heir to the same estate on coming to age. The matter is in such shape that, should Lawrence die, the property will fall to Michael, the uncle."

"I see, sir."

"During my business connection with Michael I learned these things, and other items, and one Margaret Hull, who used to

keep house for me, is now his housekeeper, and I am able to pick up information through her. It seems that a young lady in Ireland has been directing letters to Lawrence Brannagan, in care of Michael Brannagan, and as there is no such person there it has aroused the curiosity of the housekeeper. She asked Michael about it, and he explained that he had invited his nephew to come out and see him, months before, and he feared that something wrong had happened."

"I follow you, sir; go on."

"Well, knowing what I did, and knowing that old rat for the rascal he is, I have made some inquiries. Through the woman Hull I got the address of the girl in Ireland, and I wrote to her and asked for information. She said that her lover sailed from Queenstown on the steamship Atlantic in the last week in January, and that she had not heard a word from him since. She wanted to know if he was in New York, and, if so, why he was silent so long. She feared that something had happened, since they were engaged lovers, and there was no reason, far as she knew, why Lawrence should treat her in such a manner. You see just how the matter stands, and knowing that man as I do, I do not hesitate a moment in saying that he is evil enough at heart to put his young nephew out of the way for his own gain."

"That is rather a delicate and dangerous charge to make, Mr. Powers."

"I know it; but I am not saying it openly. I am saying it to you as a detective. We will investigate it, and if I am wrong, no harm is done, but if I am right I will openly make the charge and drag him to justice! He has done me too great a wrong for me to think of sparing him. In fact, any man ought to look into such a matter, if such a suspicion should enter his mind. I can show you the letters from that young lady, and you will then be able to make up your mind more fully about it. I have given her caution about writing to the uncle, and she is keeping still, waiting to hear from me. I have promised to write to her at as early a date as possible, and if you think you can be of any service in the case, we must get down to work immediately."

"That we will do, sir. I have, as I said, already picked up an item regarding the young man."

"Yes, so you said. How did you learn that he was on the steamer?"

"By an Irish lad who came over on the same steamer."

"Ha! Then he may know more about it!"

"A strange thing about it is, that the lad did not see the young man once after the vessel started."

"Well, that is peculiar. I tell you, Mr. Murphy, there is something wrong, and it must be worked out and made right. You must go into it with all your might and probe clear to the bottom."

"Will you now show me those letters, please?"

They were produced, and the detective read them through thoughtfully.

"It seems that the young man had been invited out here by the uncle," he stated. "The uncle had been telling his nephew about some grand opportunities to invest, and had advised him to sell the estate there and come to America. The young man did not sell the property, but he did start to pay his uncle a visit."

"Yes, there you have it. I thought I mentioned all those little points, but it seems I did not."

"What has the housekeeper to say about the matter?"

"She knew nothing about it."

"Did she not know that the nephew was expected to arrive? Was no preparation made for his reception?"

"No; and there is just where it looks suspicious to me. When I expect any one to see me, to stay, I let the women folks know, so they can prepare. It appears to me as if he had reason to know that the young man would not arrive at all."

"I see you are bound to suspect the man of the worst. I cannot do that until I have seen him and heard his version of the matter. Your hatred for him may have biased your judgment."

"Not a bit, for I know the man. I cannot blame you for thinking so, however. Go and see him, find out what you can, and look into the matter. That young man must be found, if alive, and if dead his murderer must be punished."

Murphy was about to take his leave, when a servant announced a caller.

"Ha!" the master of the house exclaimed, on hearing the name. "Sit down again, Mr. Murphy, for this is a person you will care to see. Tell the woman to come right in here, Mary."

The servant withdrew.

"It is Margaret Hull, Brannagan's housekeeper," informed Mr. Powers.

"Who is acting the part of spy for you in the home of her employer?"

"You do not know the man, my good fellow, you do not know the man. If you did, you would make no bones about such trifles."

"His housekeeper is false to him?"

"She knows him for his worth. Why, he owes her several years' wages—think of it, several years!"

"It strikes me that she must be the one to blame, in that case. But, I am not trying to prove that black is white, you understand."

The door opened, and a woman of middle age stepped into the room.

She was a respectable-looking person, with something of refinement in her face, and she came into the presence of the stranger without embarrassment.

The detective gave her a keen, searching look, and her appearance gave him more confidence than the statements of Mr. Powers had inspired. She did not look like one who would place herself on the side of wrong in any matter of importance. Mr. Powers introduced them.

CHAPTER IV.

MURPHY GETS TO WORK.

When the woman had taken a seat, Mr. Powers asked:

"Well, Margaret, what is it? I feel sure you bring some information concerning the case in which we are interested."

"Yes; but I expected to find you alone, Mr. Powers."

"No matter; I have told you who Mr. Murphy is."

"And you want me to speak right out before him?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Very well, then. Yes, I have some information, and I now feel sure your suspicions and my own are well grounded, Mr. Powers. Mr. Brannagan has had visitors—two men they were, and about as rascally-looking a pair as I ever saw in my life."

"What did you find out about them?"

"I found out their names—Neal Brady and Hogan Dunn. And Mr. Brannagan paid them each a big sum of money, as much as he owes me for services twice over."

Powers looked at Detective Murphy.

"What do you think about this?" he demanded.

"Is it not possible that he was paying them for some honest service?" the detective asked.

"I never knew him to pay any man at the house before in all the time I have been in his employ," the woman averred.

"And he has men in his service?"

"Lots of them, sometimes, when he has big work on hand. His clerk brings a pay roll and he makes out checks."

"Then it looks as if this is payment for some unusual work, I must admit. But, did you learn anything further, madam—hear anything to increase your suspicions?"

"By the talk, I took it that these men came over on the steamship which was supposed to bring young Lawrence, sir."

"Ha! That brings it nearer to the point."

"And I heard them talking something about 'the young one,' though I could not make out a great deal of what they said. It is my opinion that they were talking about Lawrence."

"Then you think they have done him harm?"

"I believe they killed him."

"Do not say that, madam, for it may get you into trouble, as you have no proof. Take very good care of your speech until there is something to back up your suspicions. What more can you tell?"

"That is about all I know to tell, sir. Mr. Brannagan shook hands with the two men when they left the house, and thanked them for something, and they all seemed to part on the best of terms. He said something about wishing them well in the new country."

"Then it would seem as if they were going away?"

"So I thought and believe."

"You could not catch where?"

"No, sir."

"Well, all this may lead to something more. The move now is to call on Mr. Brannagan."

"But, sir," the woman hastened, "you will not give me away? That is, you will not expose me as the one from whom you have obtained your information?"

"I will say nothing about you, madam—nothing whatever. I shall go there as a stranger, and state my business as looking for the missing Lawrence Brannagan, and will let the inference be drawn that I have been employed by some one in Ireland."

"A good plan," avowed Powers.

"And, meantime, you will do well to keep wholly silent about what you suspect," the detective cautioned.

"Never fear but we will do that, Mr. Murphy. But, I can now almost swear that Brannagan is guilty—guilty, too, of murder."

"And yet there is room for a mistake, and we must make no mistake."

The Bowling Green Detective took his leave, and went straight to the house of Michael Brannagan.

It was some minutes before the door was opened to his call, and when at last it was opened it was by a woman evidently from the kitchen, who was wiping her hands on her apron as she stood there.

"Does Mr. Brannagan live here?" the detective asked.

"Yes, sir," the answer.

"Well, is he at home?"

"He is not, sir."

"Do you know when he will be?"

"I do not. He has gone out, and he may be gone ten minutes or as many hours; I cannot say."

"I desire to see him upon a matter of importance, so I think I will come in and wait, if I may," said Murphy. "He may be back again in the course of an hour or less."

"Suit yourself about that, sir."

"I think I will wait; I can sit down here in the hall—"

"No, ye may go in the room beyond," indicating. "That is where callers wait, sir."

"Very well. By the way, has Mr. Brannagan no wife?"

"She is dead, sor."

"And you are the housekeeper?"

"No; Oi am only the cook; the housekeeper is out, too, sor."

"Well, do not let me detain you from your duties; I can pick up something to read, no doubt."

He entered the room the woman had pointed out, and about the first thing to catch his eye was a dirty card on the floor near a settee, which he picked up and examined.

It proved to be the card of a sailors' boarding house.

"Ha! One find!" decided Murphy. "This may mean nothing, and it may mean something. It has been dropped here by those two fellows, Brady and Dunn. It may indicate where they are to be found."

He sat down and looked around the room, apparently part office and part library.

The odor of tobacco pervaded the room, and stumps of cigars were here and there on the table and on the floor. There were few books, and the papers lying about were chiefly of the illustrated sporting variety. Some greasy-looking cards spoke mutely of late hours with boon companions.

These things the caller took in with one swift glance, but with a particular object in view—he was alert for some evidence, either for or against, in the case he had in hand.

Against the wall stood a desk, with a roll-top, which was up, so that the little compartments were exposed to view.

In these boxes, or pigeon holes, were letters and papers, and the detective at once changed his seat so as to make a closer inspection of the contents of the compartments without touching anything.

The end of a long envelope was protruding from one, and, on it was a foreign postage-stamp. Looking more closely, Murphy saw that it had been posted from Dublin, and that it was an inclosure of comparatively recent date. Without hesitancy he carefully drew it from its place.

It bore the printed card of a company of barristers, and was addressed in a bold, free hand to Michael Brannagan, Esq., New York City, U. S. A., with the street and number correctly given. Murphy drew out the letter it contained, and read it hurriedly to master its contents.

It was concerning the missing young man, as he had surmised, and it stated positively that he had sailed on the Atlantic from Queenstown at a given date. It advised that further inquiries be made at the company's office in New York.

The detective had barely finished the reading, when the front door opened, and a heavy step was heard in the hall, so he replaced the letter quickly and resumed his first seat near the door.

CHAPTER V.

LIMERICK LARRY MEETS OLD FRIENDS. We left Larry O'Keen on Broadway just after his little spat with his sweetheart, gazing after the cable car on which his rival was conductor.

There was blood in his eye, so to speak, and his fists were clinched as if he was more than anxious for a brush with the man he disliked so heartily. And, as he watched, he hummed:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Sure, Oi'm onto yure foine jay;
Wi'd his mustache waxed so nately
And a smile upon his mug.
Och! begorra, how I hate him!
Wi'd a good will Oi could ate him;
Some foine day me fist will mate him
Phwere the stopper fits the jug!"

Suddenly his face grew harder in expression, his fists were clinched tighter, he closed his teeth down like a vise and his eyes flashed. And no wonder, under so great a provocation.

The car had reached the place where the little flower stand was located, and the conductor was seen to bow and smile his prettiest, at the same time flirting his hand lightly, and although Larry could not see Kitty from where he stood, he knew that she was the object of the fellow's attentions.

"Begorra, it's hanged for murder Oi shall be!" the wild Irish lad exclaimed. "It is not much more av it Oi can stand, and kape me two hands off the gossoon. And av Oi do get at him, by the hat av me father, av Oi don't make him wush he had never been born!"

He shook his fist at the car, and sauntered on to get away from people who had stopped to look at him.

Not far had he gone when he came to a sudden stop.

Two men were approaching from the opposite direction, and Larry was staring at them with all the eyes he had—as we often hear it expressed.

"By the powers!" he exclaimed to himself, "av it ain't the same pair Oi will ate me shirt, so Oi will! Hello, dhene, Brady! Hello, Dunn! Phwere are ye goin' the day?"

The men stopped short, and looked to see who it was.

They were not an inviting-looking couple, but looks do not always go to indicate the man.

One was a man apparently forty-five years of age, with full whiskers. The other was larger, maybe ten years younger, and, having no beard, his hard, cruel face was fully exposed.

"Why, Hogan, it's Larry O'Keen," the latter exclaimed.

"So it is, Neal."

"And where are you goin', lad?" asked the first speaker.

"Begorra, it is going to get a job Oi am, and Oi can never foind out phwere wan is waiting for me," Larry answered.

"And where have you been keeping yourself since ye came over?" inquired Hogan.

"It is barely keeping mesel' dhat Oi have been at all at all," rejoined the lad from Limerick. "Oi have been hangin' on by the ragged edge, as it were, ever since Oi set fu't in America."

"You don't find the streets paved with gold, I take it, and you are not picking fortunes out of the gutter, the same as you would shovel turf out of an Irish bog."

"Niver a fortune, sor."

"And you never will, if you stay here till you are as old as your grandfather, or as old as he would be if livin', if he is dead. Wish we could put somethin' in your way, lad."

"So do Oi," agreed Larry. And, suddenly, he thought to ask:

"By the way, do ye moind the young man whose luggage Oi was carryin' whin we got aboard at Quanestown? Oi remember you roight well, fur ye were starin' at me an' him whin we got aboard as if ye took us to be some long-lost relations dhat ye was expectin' just then. D'ye moind him?"

The men had looked at each other, and a swift, meaning glance had been exchanged.

"Don't remember seeing any such person," assured Brady.

"I remember looking at you," added Dunn, "but that is all. Why, what about the fellow?"

"Well, dhene is a suspicion that he must have got overboard somehow, for he has niver been heard av from dhat day to this, and dhene is going to be a grand big hunt fur him."

They exchanged another look.

"What do you know about the matter?" demanded Brady. "What do you suppose that we know about it?"

"Oi don't know anything about it, 'cept

that dhe young man is missin' and dhat dher is goin' ter be dhe biggest kind of a hunt to foind him, dhat is all. It is quare about him."

"What is queer about him?"

"Phwy, Oi did not set me two eyes onto him wanst after dhe ship sailed, and now it seems dhat it is missing entoirely he is."

"And how did you come to know anything about it?" persisted Neal Brady. "And do ye suppose that we know anything about him?"

"Oi was going to ask ye av aythur av yez did see him afther dhe ship left port, and av ye know anything phwatever about him? Sure, Oi know a detective feller thot is lookin' into dhe matter, and av Oi can help him a bit it will be a playzure to do it, d'ye moind."

"You had better leave detectives alone," warned Hogan Dunn, severely, as he and his companion exchanged another glance.

"And phwy?" asked the Limerick boy.

"They are a bad lot, the best of them, and the less ye have to do with them the better ye are off, moind ye that."

"Oi don't belave it av Mister Murphy," declared Larry. "Sure, he is a gentleman all dhe way up from dhe ground, and he has promised to look out fur me a job at something to do."

"And who is Murphy?" asked Brady.

"Phwy, his full name is Horace Murphy, and he is called dhe Bowling Green Detective."

Another significant glance was exchanged between the two men, and they had now drawn close to Larry, and the trio stood against the side of a building out of the way of passers-by.

"And however did the likes of you get acquainted with a man like that?" urged Dunn. "Ye must be rising in the world, I should say."

"Oh, it was only by chance," confessed Larry. "Oi only wush thot I knew more men av dhe same stripe, sure."

"And ye have not found a job in all this time?"

"Nothing to last, worse luck."

"Then your friend Murphy can't go for much, or he would have found ye one long ago. Maybe me and me mate here can foind ye something to do, and av we can we will let ye know."

"Begorra, an' ye can do dhat; av it is any'ting at which Oi can make an honest living it is almost kissin' dhe dust from yure brogans Oi'd be."

So the wild Irish lad exclaimed, with true Irish fervor.

"Where are ye stopping?" asked Dunn.

"Begorra, it is never stopping Oi am," declared Larry, with a grim smile. "Dhe coppers kape me moving on all dhe toime. Oi slape whin Oi'm walkin', and ate whin Oi'm talkin', whin Oi have any'ting at all to ate; and dhe rest of dhe toime Oi spind lookin' fur wurruk."

They both laughed at his drollery.

"While me money lasted," Larry added. "Oi boarded wid a widdly named Callaway, who has dhe swatest— But, dhat is nothin' to yez. Oi boarded wid her till Oi had no more money, and dhen she said we w'u'd have to part, much as it pained her to be afther losing me; and we parted, and I have been goin' hand in hand wid a koind Providence ever since."

"Well," said Brady, "we are boarding at a house on Cherry street, No —, and we would like to have ye drop around and see us."

And so they parted, the two men going off talking earnestly, and Larry continuing his way humming:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Pearly teeth and laugh so gay,
Oi am driven to distraction
By dhe way yo're using me;
But, by all dhe powers higher,
Sure Oi am a mighty liar,
Av yure Nels don't get a flyer
Phwere dhe hangman's knot should be!"

CHAPTER VI.

SUSPICIONS AWAKENED.

Detective Murphy had just time to put the letter back into its place and settle himself in his first seat again when the door opened.

A heavy man with a full beard but no mustache entered the room, and he gave a start of surprise on finding a stranger there. Murphy met his gaze coolly, twirling his hat in his hands.

"Mr. Brannagan?" the detective asked.

"Yes; and who the devil are you?" was the rough response.

"My name is Murphy, sir, and I have called upon a little matter of business."

"Well, state your business, then, for time is money with me, as you must know if you know me at all."

"My business, Mr. Brannagan, is to look up your missing nephew, Lawrence Brannagan, who sailed from Ireland on the Atlantic the last week in January."

Murphy noted that the man paled slightly when he heard this.

He sat down and stretched his legs out before him, resting his elbows upon the arms of the chair and bringing his finger tips together.

"If that is your business, sir," he said, "I am more than interested in it, I assure you. I have just come from the office of the steamship company on Bowling Green, where I have been pressing inquiries."

"If that is the case, maybe you heard of me there."

"You are the Bowling Green Detective?"

"So called."

"Yes, Mr. Hedgewood mentioned you and said he would have you call upon me. But it appears that you have come before seeing him."

"I am here in the private interest of Miss Katherine McCarthy, of Dublin, who is starting inquiries for her missing lover, Mr. Brannagan. He left Ireland at the time I have named, with the intention of paying you a visit."

"You have it right," acquiesced the man, "and it is a mystery where he can be."

"Have you waited until this time to begin inquiries?" asked Murphy.

"Bless you, no. I have been in correspondence with a firm of barristers in Dublin, and have been tracing the matter on the other side. I did not consider it of much use to do anything on this side until I had made sure that he had sailed at the time intended."

"Well, there is something in that. And you have heard finally from these lawyers, then?"

"Yes," reaching up and taking down the letter which Murphy had read, "here is a letter just received in which they assure me that the young man positively sailed at the time specified. Their detectives have proven that, it seems. Now, of course, I must begin with the steamship officials and try to trace him to this side."

"Did you look for your nephew by that steamer?"

"Well, yes, in a manner. He was a brief writer, and he said that perhaps he would sail on the Atlantic, giving the date."

"Why did he choose that line, and that particular time?"

"You ask me too much. I had extended several invitations for him to come over, and had even urged him to dispose of his interests there and come over here and double his fortune; so I suppose he took it into his head of a sudden to make the voyage. As to the line, it was the easiest way for him to

run over to Queenstown by rail and there take the steamer."

Murphy was amazed at the man's frankness in the details, after what he had heard from Powers.

"And could the steamship people give you any information?" he asked.

"None at all, sir. They said the reports showed that no such name had been entered on the ship's register."

"You met the steamer on its arrival?"

"Yes; but I was not disappointed at all when the boy did not appear."

"You had seen a photograph of him, then, and would know him at sight, I presume, sir."

"Well, no; I had in mind the face of his father, though, for Lawrence had assured me that people said he was the image of what his father had been at his age. Besides, I asked for him by name of the officers."

"I understand there were two brothers, of whom you are one," observed the detective. "The other was Antrim, who inherited your father's estate and remained in Ireland when you came to this country. He died, leaving this son Lawrence, who is rightful heir to the same estate, if living. In the event of his death, to whom would the property go?"

"Why do you ask that, sir?"

"I want to see if it is possible that some relation there in Ireland can have had an object in putting him out of the way."

Mr. Brannagan's face was a study. He was white and red by turns, and yet was making the best effort possible not to show that he was in the least agitated by what had been said.

"There is no near relation in Ireland," he said. "If anything of that kind should happen, or has happened, I suppose the estate will come into my hands. But we will not speak of that; we must find the young man alive. Surely you would not think me guilty of putting him out of the way?"

"It is the last thing any one should think of you, sir," was the reply to that. "Have you corresponded with Miss McCarthy?"

"Only to inform her that Lawrence was not here, and that I had started inquiry."

"Has she written to you lately?"

"Not a word."

"How do you account for that?"

"Well, there is nothing I can tell her, and no doubt she makes inquiries of the Dublin barristers."

Murphy remembered what Powers had said, and while this was a good reason, he believed that the other was the true one. She did not write because she had been warned.

"That is reasonable," he observed. "Well, I shall begin and investigate thoroughly."

"What will be your plan of work?" the man asked.

"One thing, I will get as many names as possible of the persons who came over on the steamer that voyage and who can be found, and will call upon them and make close inquiries."

"Yes, yes; that will be a good plan, sure enough. I had not thought of that. But, then, it is not in my line."

"I have already learned one thing."

"Ha! what is that?"

"That the young man positively did get on board the Atlantic at Queenstown at the time specified."

Mr. Brannagan's face showed a feeling of keen satisfaction on hearing this said.

"Can you prove that?" he quickly asked.

"Yes; by a boy who carried his luggage for him, sir. I have picked up that boy by mere chance. You appear gratified."

"Yes, for it gives you something to work upon. Now, if you can only trace him to this side and find him, you will be doing a good bit of work. It is possible he may have lost his reason—"

"Or he may have fallen overboard."

"Heaven forbid!"

"I have heard of two other men who, I think, were passengers that voyage, and I must make it my business to see them. They can supply me with the names of others, and so inquiry will progress rapidly."

"Why not get all the names at the office?"

"I shall do that, too, but I want those particularly who are easy to find. The two I have named are, I think, at a sailors' boarding-house down on Cherry street, and I shall go and see them."

Mr. Brannagan had given a start and could not disguise the fact that he was disturbed.

"Who are these men?" he tried to ask calmly.

"Their names are Neal Brady and Hogan Dunn, and I believe they are soon to go away, so I must see them as quickly as I can."

Brannagan was now white to the lips, and knowing that he could not hide it he pressed his hand to his side and complained of a feeling of faintness, and reached for a bottle stowed away in one of the pigeon-holes of his desk.

"Well, we must do everything possible," he urged. "That young man must be found, and I shall spare no expense to find him. Won't you take a drop with me? I have to take it for this confounded stitch that takes me now and then. Leave no stone unturned, Mr. Murphy."

Their interview soon came to a close, then, and the detective departed.

CHAPTER VII.

PECULIAR COINCIDENCE.

Detective Murphy was in a brown study when he again got upon a Broadway car to return down-town.

Running over in mind all the particulars of his interview with Michael Brannagan, he was inclined to agree with Powers that things looked suspicious.

True, the man had appeared to be perfectly open and aboveboard in all he had said, and his desire to find the young man seemed earnest, but the excitement and consternation betrayed at the close of the interview gave the shrewd shadower the true clew.

"There is something rotten in Denmark," Murphy decided; "whatever it may be, and I must go deeper and find out. Ah! here is Union Square; I will stop off and see about that other matter."

He left the car and entered a large store, where he remained something like an hour in an interview with one of the proprietors.

At the end of that time he boarded another car to continue his homeward journey.

The conductor was a spruce-looking chap, with a waxed mustache.

Murphy was busy with his thoughts, thinking hard upon three or four different affairs he had in hand, and paid little or no heed to time or distance.

He was sitting by the open window at the rear end of the car, with his head resting upon his hand, and seemed oblivious to his surroundings, as indeed he was, partly, when a familiar voice broke upon his ear, saying:

"Oi am not goin' far wi'd ye; Oi have just slipped on board to whisper a word av warnin' into yure ear, av ye have dhe good sinse to moind it."

Looking up quickly Murphy beheld Limerick Larry—the Loony poet—and the person he was addressing was the conductor.

"Well, what do you want to say?" the conductor asked.

"It is in danger av yure loife ye are, did ye but know it," was Larry's answer.

"In danger of my life? What do you mean?"

"Dhere is a big policeman, twice as big as yersel', dhat has got his eye on ye fur kapes."

"I don't know what you are talking about. If you have inything to tell me, out with it; otherwise, pay your fare or get off!"

"Oi will make it plain phwat Oi am talkin' about. You are flirtin' wi'd a gurrel dhat sells flowers down here on Broadway a pace, and that policeman is swate on her, d'ye moind."

"What of it?"

"Phwat av it? Begorra, av ye don't let up on it ye are loikely to be gettin' it phwere dhe chicken got dhe axe, that is all!"

"And did that policeman tell you to come and tell me that?" demanded the conductor, flushing angrily, noting that his passengers were all snickering. "If he did, you may tell him to soak his head!"

"It is punching av yures he will be!" cried Larry.

"Bah! let him try it! Get off my car!"

"Ol'm goin'; don't worry; and, begorra, ye will do well to pay heed to me warnin'."

The lad from Limerick dropped off, and as the passengers burst into a roar of laughter the conductor's face was like a live coal for redness. He evidently wished himself elsewhere.

Murphy, laughing with the rest, got up and left the car at once, for he wanted to talk further with Larry, and as he approached him he was in time to hear him humming words to this effect:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Ol have opened now dhe play,
Wid yure dude av a conductor,
And, begorra, Ol mane biz;
To stop fool'n' Ol invite him,
Av he don't, then Ol will foight him,
And be hivvins Ol will smite him
Phwere his Adam's apple is!"

The detective laughed heartily, and as soon as he recovered, he asked:

"Why, Larry, what is the matter?"

"Oh! is it you, Mister Murphy? Begorra, Ol have just been afther reading av dhe riot act to dhat gossoon av a conductor, and now av he don't let up on his at tintions to me Kitty, he will figure at a funeral."

"You seem to have it bad, Larry."

"Not half as bad as he will have it whin Ol get done with him, by dhe same token."

"People will think you are loony, sure enough, my lad, if you are going to carry on in this sort of fashion, and I don't know but what they will be more than half right."

"Ol don't care a thistle what they t'ink."

"Do you know what Shakespeare says?"

"Divil a bit do Ol care phwat he says, sor."

"He says—the lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact, and you seem to comprise the three in one."

"Ol don't care a tinker's nip av it is a howling idiot Ol am entoirely," Larry retorted. "Ol am not going to be cut out av me heart's affection by a strap-pullin' jigger on a strate car, and don't ye forget it!"

"It will have to be as the girl says, won't it?"

"No, begorra! It shall be as Ol say!"

"Well, I wish you well. Maybe when you get a job and get spruced up a bit you

can easily knock him out of the ring. But I want to talk with you about other matters, which, with me, just now are business."

"Sure, it is welcome to all Oi can tell ye ye'll be, sor; set yure mill to runnin'."

"You came over in the steerage of the steamer Atlantic, I believe."

"Ye are believin' no lie, sor."

"You came to know the names of some of your fellow-passengers, no doubt."

"Divil a doubt about it at all at all, sor. Oi got hold av dhe handles av dhe most av them, sor, dhe while we wur crossin'."

"Did you learn of such names as Neal Brady and Hogan Dunn?"

"By dhe bloomin' rod av Aaron, but it is dhe divil at guessin' ye are, Mister Murphy! How did ye know that?"

"Never mind the little particulars, Larry. Would you know them if you were to see them again?"

"Would Oi know them?"

"Because, if you think you would, I want you to come with me and point them out to me on the sly. I think we will find them down at No. — Cherry Street."

"Mister Murphy, it is afraid av ye Oi am! Sure, it must be own first cousin to dhe Ould Bhoy hissel' ye are! By dhe same token, Oi belave ye are linked ar-rums wid him fur business."

Murphy laughed. "What makes you think that, my lad?" he asked.

"Because, sure, it is afther knowing everything ye are, so ye are. Phwat is dhe use av yure askin' questions av dhe loikes av me?"

"If I knew everything I would not have to work so hard at my profession, would I. Larry? And I would certainly have no need of your service to point out these two men."

"Well, that is so, I suppose."

"I am going to let you help me on this case, Larry, for you are a likely lad—"

"Loikely to fall a victim to dhe club av dhe fool-killer dhe first toime dhat he happens my way, is it ye mane?"

"Oh, no; I mean that you are not as great a fool as you are taken to be, and you may be able to be a big help to me in this matter. You can no doubt point out these men—"

"Oi can, you bet!"

"And, should luck favor us so far, you will be able to identify young Brannagan if we fall in with him, provided that he is living—which I very much doubt, now."

"Oi could do that same, too!"

"What is more, I will pay you for your aid, and so put a little lining into your pocket. What do you say?"

"Phwat do Oi say? Begorra, it is a go! And, by the same token, it is not two hours ago dhat Oi saw dhem two same mates on Broadway, and dhey invoited me to come to see dhem at dhe place phwere dhey are stopping!"

Here was a strange coincidence, and the detective inquired into the particulars as they walked along.

CHAPTER VIII. MEETING THE RASCALS.

The Bowling Green Detective was interested.

The points of the case seemed to be falling into place of their own accord, somehow.

"Did you notice the men first, or did they first see you?" Murphy inquired, to get a right understanding of the whole matter.

"Oi saw them first, sor," answered Larry. "Oi spoke to them, and it was surprised indade they were to see me. Dhey asked afther me good health, and tried to gillie me a bit, but Oi was wi'd dhem every toime."

"I can well believe that, my lad. And

you say they invited you to come and see them."

"Thot same they did."

"How did that come about?"

"Oi tould them Oi was lookin' fur a job, and dhey said dhey moight help me a bit."

"Did they say anything about going away?"

"Divil a wurred, sor."

"I understand they are going to leave the country pretty soon, and that is one reason why I want to see them as soon as possible. Was anything said about the missing man?"

"There was that same, sor. Oi asked them av dhey remembered him, and tould them thot a friend av mine, yersel', was lookin' fur him. Oi thought maybe Oi could learn something to tell ye, don't ye moind?"

"Did you mention my name to them?"

"Oi did."

"I am sorry for that, but it can't be helped now."

"Oi hope Oi have done no harrum, Mister Murphy."

"You did it for the best, so let it pass. What did they have to say to that?"

"Why, they made eyes at each other, Oi noticed, and dhey advised me dhat Oi had better lave dhe loikes av ye'sel' alone. sayin' That detectives are no good, d'ye best av dhem."

"Maybe they are right, and maybe they have an object in saying so."

"Oi tould dhem thot Oi didn't believe it av you, and dhen they wanted to know who ye was and all about ye, and Oi tould dhem."

"And I am glad you have told me, for it will give me a clever way by which to approach them. We can go together and see them, and we need not be sly about it, either."

"Oi am wi'd ye, sor."

"They told you where they live?"

"Dhe same place ye named yersel', sor."

"Very well, come along, and we will go there at once."

At that point in their talk, however, they came to the flower stand kept by pretty Kitty Callaway, and Larry had to stop there.

"Oi will be wid ye in just wan minute, Mister Murphy," he said. "Oi must stop and tell me Kitty that Oi have warned her pickled herrin' to look out fur a bit av a stick."

"You may trot right along," spoke up the flower girl, who had overheard the remark. "You have no right to speak so disrespectful of Mr. Nelson, who I have every reason to believe is a gentleman."

"You call him Mister Nelson, whin ye don't know whether that is his first name or his last, do ye?"

"I heard the gripman call him Nelson one day."

"And now ye have heard me call him something else, begorra! And it is a hape worse nor thot Oi will be afther calling av him, too, d'ye moind. Oi'll bet ye a pinny his name is Smith, or Brown."

"I don't care if it is Black, or White, or Green; it is none of your business, anyhow."

"Begorra, it will be Dinnis before Oi git done wid him."

And with that Larry walked off in something of a temper, and as he turned away he exercised his muse to this effect:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Yure a tantalizing fay,
Whin ye know Oi love ye dearly,
Swatest gurrel in all Noo York;
Ol w'n'd have ye fur me own,
So lave Nelson quite alone,
Or he will get a bunch av bone
Phwere dhe bottle gets dhe cork!"

Detective Murphy had to smile, and, glancing back at the flower girl, he saw

that she was smiling, too, and that there was a roguish twinkle in her laughing eyes as she watched Larry.

"You seem determined, Larry," Murphy remarked.

"Oi am that!" the wild Irish lad averred. "Oi will run dhat gossoon out av Oi have to run him through wid a splinter, d'ye moind!"

"Well, faint heart never won fair lady, you know, so put on your spurs and wade right in, and may good luck attend you. I think you will stand a fair chance if she sees you are in dead earnest."

"As if Oi could be any more in earnest nor phwat Oi am! But, Oi will show them who Oi am before dhe t'ing is done wi'd. or me name is mud. Av Oi have to do it, begorra, Oi will take that jigger by the neck and Oi will whip his seels over the dashboard av his car till he will holler bloody murther!"

"Do you think you can do it?"

"Can Oi do it? Did ye notice the thinness av his legs?"

Murphy laughed, and the matter was dropped as they hurried off to the east side of the city.

Presently they found themselves in Cherry Street, and in due time they came to the number they sought and entered the basement, which was fitted up like a semi-saloon.

It was not an inviting place, and a number of rough men eyed them sharply as they went in.

The Limerick boy looked swiftly about.

"Oi don't see them, sor."

"Who d'ye want ter see?" asked a big man at the bar.

"A couple of men named Brady and Dunn," explained Murphy. "Do you know where they can be found?"

"I think they have just gone down to their dock," was answered.

"And where is that?"

The number of the dock was given.

"Does their ship sail to-day?"

"No, not for a couple of days yet, I believe."

"Know what her name is?"

"The Black Swan."

"And where does she clear for?"

"Australia."

"Much obliged to you. We'll stroll down that way and see if we can fall in with them."

"Friends of yours?"

"Well, we can't claim as that, but I have to see them on a matter of business that may be to their interest."

"Then it is all right. We don't make it a practice to give information if it is goin' to git our patrons into trouble with anybody, but you don't look like that sort."

"Glad my looks speak so well for me," was Murphy's pleasant rejoinder, and he and Larry passed out.

They proceeded straight on to South Street, where they came out upon the usual swamp of masts of vessels from all parts of the world that usually line the docks there.

A little walk further brought them to the dock where the Black Swan was lying, a large three-master, square-rigged on all the masts, whose long bowsprit reached well nigh across the street and as they walked out upon the dock, Larry suddenly caught Murphy's arm and pointed.

"There dhey are!" said he.

"The one with the whiskers and that villainous-looking fellow?"

"Dhe same, sor."

"All right. Come along and introduce me, and I will talk with them."

So they advanced, and when they came up to where the two men were standing, Larry stepped forward and addressed them in his cheerful manner, causing them to look around with a start.

"Here we have found yez," he said. "Dhis is the gentleman Oi was telling yez about, and Oi have brought him to talk wi'd yez. Mister Murphy, dhis is Neal Brady, and dhis is Hogan Dunn, me fellow passengers down perchune dhe ribs av dhe Atlantic whin she came over six months ago, and dhe devil's own voyage it was, by dhe same token; Oi'll lave it to thim av it wasn't."

The two men greeted Murphy, but they looked savage enough to eat him and Larry together.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MISSING MAN.

"I wanted to talk with you, gentlemen," explained Murphy, cordially, "and Larry, knowing where you were stopping, came along to introduce me."

"Yes, he spoke about ye," admitted Dunn.

"If you will some with me across the street, I think we can find a place to sit down and have a little grog while we talk," the detective invited. "I don't want to get information for nothing, you see."

"It is mighty little you will get, anyhow, I'm thinkin'," asserted Brady.

"You may be able to tell me something. There will be money in it for you if you can put me on the track of a missing man."

"Well, we will go with ye, but as for telling ye anything that will do ye any good, I don't believe we can. What say, mate?" turning to his companion.

"That's about what I think," agreed Dunn.

"Well, we will have the grog together, anyhow," urged Murphy. "Come along, and we'll drink to your voyage."

"How do you happen to know we are goin' on a voyage?" demanded Brady.

"Why, your boarding-house boss told me, of course!"

"Oh, I see."

They passed off the dock and across the street, and Murphy led the way into one of the best looking of the saloons which there abounded.

Finding a vacant table, they all sat down, when Murphy called for something strong for himself and the two men and a soft drink for Larry, making the remark that he did not believe in boys drinking anything stronger.

"You came over in the Atlantic," the spotter remarked, when the stuff had been served.

"Yes, that is straight," Dunn admitted.

"Where did you take passage?"

"Liverpool."

"You remember the call at Queenstown, of course? Did you notice this lad when he got on board there?"

"Yes, we did take notice of him," answered Brady. "He was such a wild Irish lad we could not help it."

"Well, did you notice a young man whose luggage he was carrying when they came on board? That is the important thing, for that young man is mysteriously missing, it seems."

"We can't remember him," promptly declared Dunn. "The lad asked us about that when we met him to-day."

"Yes, he told me he did."

"And he could have told you all about it as well as we."

"No doubt; but I wanted to see if you could give me the names and addresses of some other passengers. Some one else might be able to tell me something about him, you see."

"Yes, that's so."

"Well, can you?"

"Hang me if I can recall the name of one of them; can you, Hogan?"

"Not one," Dunn averred. "Ye see, we just met them for a few days, and when the ship arrived, there was an end of it."

"Natural, of course."

"Why are ye looking for this young man?" asked Brady.

"Why, his uncle, Mr. Michael Brannagan, is very anxious about him, and has started inquiry."

The two men glanced at each other and looked relieved.

"Oh, that is the way of it, eh?" observed Brady. "Well, we are sorry that we don't know something that will be of use to ye, but we don't. Maybe the poor chap got overboard."

"That is just what is feared."

"Don't the ship's officers know anything about him?"

"I can't find out about that until the steamship comes again into port. The register at the office does not mention his name."

"And yet ye are sure that he got on board?"

"Yes, we have clear proof of that. This lad came on board with him, and Mr. Brannagan has received a letter from Ireland with further proof of it."

"Then it is a mystery, sure enough. I am afraid that you will never find him," Dunn remarked.

"I have got to find him or learn of his fate."

Murphy was playing easy with them; it was the hound on a still hunt; he knew instinctively that these two fellows held the secret he was after, and would even proceed on the long voyage with them if necessary to get at the truth.

"When do you sail for Australia?" he presently asked.

"In a couple of days," was the answer. "As sailors?"

"No; as passengers," spoke up Dunn.

"Pardon me; you do not look like men of means, and hence my mistake."

"That is all right," said Brady. "Don't always judge a man by his looks, for you may be mistaken."

"Well, pardon me. I took you to be sailors. But it seems to me it would have been cheaper for you to have gone straight from Liverpool to Australia, without coming to New York."

"But we wanted to see New York."

"Oh, that was it, eh? Then I am wrong again, it seems. Do you know, I have often desired to take such a voyage."

"Well, why don't you?"

"There is no reason why I shouldn't. I have neither wife nor child, and nothing to tie me on shore, and for two pins I would do it. The sight of all these ships has given me a desire for the deep blue."

"But, if you did that, you couldn't find the missing man," intimated Dunn.

"Oh, really, it is nothing to me," Murphy easily waived. "Some one else could undertake the job, but I think he would find it a sticker on his hands, as it now seems."

The two fellows looked at each other again.

"Ye had better go along with us, and the lad with ye," suggested Brady. "He has had no luck here in New York, so he tells me."

"But it is never wan step out av New York will ye get me till I have squared off wi'd dhat gossoon av a Nelson!" cried Larry, whose mind had evidently been dwelling upon his rival.

"And who is Nelson?" asked Brady.

"A fellow who is Larry's rival, that is all," explained Murphy.

"As if that isn't enough!" exclaimed the wild Irish lad. "Wait till ye hear Oi have ate him!"

All laughed at his earnestness in the matter; then they rose and left the place.

Just as they came out upon the sidewalk Dunn grabbed Brady's arm with a sudden clutch, his face like the hue of death, and whispered something into his ear, causing Brady to look.

His face, too, turned white, and they looked at once to see if Murphy and Larry noticed it. Murphy was pretending not to do so, but Limerick Larry, who had followed the direction of their gaze, let out a cry, and, grabbing hold of Murphy, exclaimed:

"Dhere he is, sor! Dhere is dhe very man ye are lookin' fur, sure as me name is Larry O'Keen!"

"Where? Which one?" asked Murphy, for the Irish lad was too excited to designate clearly.

"Dhere! Dhe wan wi'd dhe sailor's cap an' jacket on! Hello, Mister Brannagan!"

At the moment Larry called out, however, a great shouting arose in the street, owing to a runaway team that was dashing up, and his voice was completely drowned.

The team dashed up on the curb and crashed into the windows of a store, and in the confusion of the moment, the sailor was lost sight of, but Larry continued to declare it was the missing young man.

"You must have been mistaken, Larry," protested Brady.

"Mistaken, yure mother's poipe!" retorted the boy. "Don't ye suppose Oi would know him, and it only six months since Oi saw him last? And, begorra, dhe both av yez knowed him, too, dark as he has grown!"

"We knowed him?"

"Yis, beegorra, ye knowed him! A bloind man could tell dhat same by dhe paleness dhat came over dhe two mugs av yez. Didn't ye notice dhat same yersel', Mister Murphy?"

"You notice too blamed much, you do!" grated Brady, glaring ominously at the boy from Limerick.

CHAPTER X.

MAKING A DISCOVERY.

Detective Murphy would willingly have paid a big price rather than have had Larry to make such a remark.

He had pretended not to notice the paleness of the two men, as said, for he wanted it to appear that he did not see their agitation.

"I guess it was the sight of the runaway that gave them their start, Larry, my lad," he made response. "The horses came near to running over a woman just up the street."

"Then you seen that?" Brady quickly caught up. "Wasn't it enough to make a fellow's hair stand on end?"

"That's what it was!" chimed in Dunn.

"Well, mebby dhat was what you seen," assumed Larry, "but phwat Oi saw mesel' was Lawrence Brannagan or his ghost. dhe wan or dhe other, and dhat Oi will stick to as long as dhere is breat' in me body. Oi am not bloind, and me two eyes don't play me tricks loike that."

"Bah! ye wur' dreamin'!" sneered Brady. "Phwat d'ye suppose he would be doin' wi'd a sailor's hat and jacket on, as ye said? Av it was him, wouldn't he be dressed like a gentleman? And wouldn't he be going to his uncle's house? It is talking through your hat ye are, as the boys say. I guess that bilgewater ye have just been drinkin' has gone to your head."

At that the two fellows laughed heartily, and Larry would have given them a cutting rejoinder had it not been for the fact that he had caught a signal from Murphy to let it pass.

"Have yure own way about it," he said, simply.

"There is a big chance that the lad was mistaken," remarked the detective. "In a place like New York, where thousands upon thousands of men are congregated, it would be strange if resemblances did not occur. Well, boys, maybe I will

see you again, but if I don't I wish you a safe voyage."

"Thanks to ye," responded Brady. "And ye had better put that wild Irish lad away where he won't be doing harm to himself till he gets a bit civilized."

Again they laughed at their own poor joke.

"Be hivvins!" cried Larry, "it is lookin' out dhat yez don't get put away y'erselves ye had better be!"

This remark Murphy tried to offset by giving the two men a wink, and without further words he turned away and left them, leading Larry by the arm, and the lad's face was full of rage.

"Mister Murphy, do ye think it is a liar Oi am?" Larry soon demanded.

"Not a bit of it, my lad," Murphy answered. "I didn't want you to say any more there, that was all."

"Thin phwy didn't ye say so? Oi would have shut up as tight as a gosling wi'd dhe croup. But, Oi see; ye didn't want them to know dhat ye belayed me. Phwat a loon Oi am, to be sure!"

"That was it, Larry."

"And ye do belave me?"

"That is just what I want to ask you about. Are you right down positive that it was young Brannagan you saw?"

"Mister Murphy, Oi will swear to it, av ye will have me do that, on a pile av Bibles as high as the tallest stayple in dhe town, dhat it was Lawrence Brannagan and nobody else!" stoutly averred the Limerick lad.

"And he was clad like a sailor?"

"He was that."

"And you said his skin was dark?"

"So it was."

Then we must set it down that he has been on the water all these months, and that he has been in a warm clime."

"It looks raysonable, Mister Murphy."

"I am only sorry that you were not able to draw his attention. You could have done so had it not been for that runaway. Now, Larry, I must give you a piece of work to do."

"Phwat is it, sor?"

"You must watch along these docks till you see him again."

"Oi can do that same."

"Here is some money to supply your needs. You must ask questions, and get your eyes upon the boats that are latest in. You can make friends with the sailors you meet, and I leave the rest of it to you."

"And phwat av Oi fall in wi'd him, sor?"

"Tell him to come to my office, and if for any reason he will not do that, make sure that you find out where he is stopping."

"All right, sor."

"And a word of caution by the way."

"Phwat is that?"

"Mind that you do not let temptation overcome you and lead you to slip up to Broadway to a certain flower stand there."

"Oi will try not to do that, sor, but by dhe same token me heart will be dhere all dhe day, and me blood will be boilin' whenever Oi think av dhat spindle-legged jigger on dhe cars!"

Murphy smiled.

"If I see Miss Callaway I will drop a good word for you, Larry," he promised.

"And if you want to find me, come to my office or inquire at the office of the steamship company—you know where that is, the one we are interested in."

"Yis, sor."

"I am going to shadow those two rascals, for now I am pretty sure that there has been a crime of some sort committed, and that the suspicions of Mr. Powers—But you have no interest in all that,

Larry. You keep a keen lookout for the young man, and if you see him again make sure that you do not lose him."

"Trust me for that, sor."

"And another thing."

"Phwat is it?"

"You are aware that these two fellows have no love for you."

"Begorra, there is no love wasted perchance us, thin, sor; Oi have no high regard fur them, aythur."

"What I was going to say, you will have to look out for them."

"Oi will that same."

"If they get a chance at you they may do you some injury, for you gave them a scare that has no doubt knocked out their appetite for supper, and they will pay you back if they can."

"Oi will watch out fur them, sor."

"Well, that is all, I guess. If I want you I will saunter down this way and find you. Take care of yourself, my lad."

So saying, Murphy turned away, leaving Larry singing:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Sure ye are a sunshine's ray,
But y'u're driving me 'most crazy
Wi'd yure playing fast and loose.
Ol've no love for strate-car ringers,
And av dhat wan 'round ye lingers,
By dhe powers he'll find my fingers
Phwere dhe tailor takes dhe goose!"

"And dhat same he will, too!" he exclaimed, in more forceful prose, doubling his fists and shutting his teeth down hard. "Maybe it is crazy Oi am, Oi dun'no'; but it is crazy he will be whin Oi am done wi'd him, and Oi see any more av his flirtin' wi'd me Kitty!"

That matter, however, did not prevent his bending himself to the business he had in hand, and he set about the work that had been laid out for him.

He moved along the street from dock to dock, looking at the various ships lying there, and occasionally asking a question.

At the same time he kept a careful watch for the reappearance of the man he had seen.

Presently he gave a start as he glanced at the name of one of the ships, for it was a name he had seen before and he remembered where.

The name of the ship was Victoria Royal, and he remembered that the steamship Atlantic had passed her outward bound on the day when he was a passenger on the latter and steamed out of Cork Harbor.

"Begorra, here is a ship Oi have seen before, at any rate," he said to himself. "Not that dhere is anyt'ing quare about dhat, but it is loike meeting an ould friend from home, so it is. Oi belave Oi will venture on board av her and try to foind out phwere she has been dhe while."

He carried out his intention, and was accosted by an Irish sailor the moment his feet touched the deck. The lad from Limerick had a quick tongue and a ready wit, however, and instead of being sent ashore he was soon engaged in conversation with the sailor, and in that conversation he was destined to learn of something that would be of interest to his employer.

The ship had recently reached New York from Australia, whither she was bound at the time when Larry had seen her before

CHAPTER XI.

THE LIMERICK LAD STRIKES A TRAIL.

When the Bowling Green Detective left the Irish boy on guard he made it his first object to assume a disguise.

He lost no time in going to a place where that could be accomplished, and when next he appeared on the street he

looked for all the world like a sailor about the stage of "half seas over."

He rolled along the street singing, not rolling enough to draw police attention, perhaps, but not walking steadily enough to make a straight course.

And in this manner he proceeded to Cherry Street.

Reaching that thoroughfare he proceeded to the house where he had before made inquiry for Brady and Dunn, and entered.

Almost the first person he saw and recognized was Michael Brannagan.

He had evidently been there but a few seconds, and was pacing the floor as if waiting for some one whom he expected immediately.

This was a surprise for Murphy, and yet no great surprise, either. It gave him proof that Brannagan was probably the rascal he was reputed to be, and he was glad that he had happened upon the scene at so opportune a time.

Stepping to the bar, Murphy asked for a glass of grog.

While he was disposing of that Brady and Dunn entered from the rear part of the house, and their faces showed surprise when they saw who their caller was.

Brannagan advanced to them at once and they all sat down by a table, and it was in a location where it was the easiest thing in the world for Murphy to drop into a seat just behind them, where he ordered more grog.

"What brings you here, sir?" he had already heard Brady ask.

"Because I wanted to see you," Brannagan had replied. And then when they had taken seats he added:

"I am afraid the devil is to pay here, boys, and I have come to put you on your guard and tell you to get out of these quarters and seek another place till you sail."

"I guess the devil is to pay, sure enough," agreed Brady.

"Then you have seen him?"

"Yes, for a certainty."

"Just what I was afraid of. I have taken a risk in coming here, but I had to do it, for I couldn't rest easy until I had seen you. That keen-edge detective may do mischief if you don't be guarded against him."

"Bah! We have seen the detective, but all he made out of us he could put in his eye and it wouldn't hurt him a bit."

"I am mighty glad to hear you say that, for I thought maybe he would lead you into saying something that would commit you. If he has seen you, and you have turned him off, maybe that will settle it."

"He told us he was working for you, sir."

"Yes, so he is; but, confound him, he knows too much!"

"How is that?"

"Why, you might be sure that I did not mention your name to him, and yet he had found you out, somehow."

"It was only by merest chance, sir, by falling in with a wild Irish lad who came over on the same steamer with us."

"And what did he know?"

"Nothing, of course."

"Well, if that is all there is to it I can rest easier. But, boys, take the best of care that nothing happens before you get away."

"Don't you be afraid of us," assured Dunn.

"And here is something apiece for you, to make you all the more careful," and he slipped a bill into the hand of each.

"Good luck to you in your new country!"

With that Mr. Brannagan arose to go,

for he evidently wanted to make his stay there as short as possible.

"Thanks to ye," said Brady. "Go home and rest easy, sir, and so will we."

They shook hands and Brannagan hastened out.

"That was a mighty close shave," cried Brady, bringing his fist down upon the table and emphasizing with an oath. "I thought he had seen that other one, when he asked us if we had seen him."

"So did I," agreed Dunn.

"But I steered him off, soon as I found he meant the detective, and then all was plain sailing. But, Hogan, we are in a tight place, if we don't find that fellow and do him up."

They were speaking in low tones, but Murphy could hear well enough.

"There is no doubt about its bein' him; we have agreed on that," averred Dunn.

"It was him or a twin brother, and as he had none it was him for sure. We take no stock in ghosts or anything of that sort. It was Lawrence Brannagan."

"Better speak no names, Neal."

"You are right, but I wanted to set that fact down hard."

"The fact that the Irish boy knew him makes it certain beyond a doubt."

"Yes, we have settled all that. The thing now is to settle what we are goin' to do for our protection."

"I wish we sailed to-day."

"So do I, with all me heart, but we don't."

"Worse luck. We have got to keep clear of the feller, and of Brannagan, too, now."

"He is all right."

"Yes, but he won't be if he gets onto the fact that the youngster is alive. That was what I was so careful about, don't ye see?"

"What d'ye suppose the feller will do?"

"No tellin' what he intends to do. If he gets sight of us we ought to know pretty well what he will do."

"And if that wild Irish lad sees him again he will speak to him, and the whole business will come out. I tell you what it is, that boy ought to be put out of the way."

"And how would you do it?"

"I don't know, but he is a dangerous witness. If young Brannagan could get hold of him, and then run us to cover, he would make it hot for us."

"Not a doubt of it, but there is a great big if in it. The chances are about one in a thousand that the boy will fall in with him again. If the fellow goes to his uncle there w'll be music."

"And we had better be out of it."

"What do you say to changing our quarters at once?"

"I think we had better do it, for it will insure our safety a good deal better."

So they talked on for a time, and Detective Murphy was taking in all that passed between them, with keen interest in everything.

That the two rascals were in a stew of anxiety was plain, and it was also plain that they had good reason to be. Murphy had heard enough to give him the main points in the business.

Some things seemed perfectly plain. It appeared clear that Brannagan had hired these two men to murder his nephew, and that they had done it so far as their good intention in that direction was concerned, but, to their amazement, here was the victim alive and well.

These seemed facts, and yet what puzzled the detective puzzled the rascals themselves as well.

Murphy paid close attention to everything.

"I tell you what I think about it," said Dunn, after some thought.

"What is it?" asked his companion.

"I think we had better slip quietly out of New York and leave the whole business behind us."

"We will be off in three days."

"A good deal might happen in three days."

"I know it, but we must take chances of that and take steps against any dangers. We have paid our passage money, and we can't afford to forfeit that."

"Maybe we can get it back again."

"We won't try to. We have made up our minds to a certain thing, and we will carry that out, and Satan help the man who would get in our way."

"Well, if you are willing to risk it I suppose I can, but I don't like it all the same. But we will change our place of lodging, and that at once. I'll settle our score while you get our luggage."

That agreed upon, they rose from the table, and one went from the room while the other made a settlement with the man at the bar, and the first soon returning, they left the house.

Half an hour later Detective Murphy located them in another similar resort within a stone's throw of the ship upon which they expected to take passage in a few days. There he left them for the time being.

CHAPTER XII.

LIMERICK LARRY LEADS THE WAY.

The Limerick boy's rich brogue, perhaps, was what had first given the Irish sailor a friendly regard for him.

Whether that, or his ready wit, as before suggested, does not particularly matter; a few words brought out the fact that both were natives of the same country, and that was enough.

"And so it is to Australia ye have been and back again?" Larry observed.

"Roight ye are, me b'y," assented the man, with a brogue if anything a little thicker than Larry's own.

"And is it a foine place?"

"A place? Don't ye know dhat it is a whole wurreld set off dhere by itself, me b'y? Av ye mane Port Phillip and Melbourne, then it is shouting ye are whin ye say foine place!"

"It would be me delight to go dhere."

"And phwy don't ye, ay it is free ye are, and av ye are having no luck in America?"

"But Oi am not free altogether," said Larry, with a thought of Kitty Callaway. "No matter about dhat; it is strange dhat we should be talkin' here on dhe mere strength av me seeing yure ship whin we st'amed out av Cork."

"By dhe same token, lad, did ye note dhat we haved to soon after yure stame ship had passed us?"

"Oi did not," said Larry; "Oi wint below."

"Well, we did, and we picked up a man."

"Picked up a man?" and Larry's eyes flew open to their widest upon hearing that.

"Phwy, have ye lost one?" the sailor asked, in an amused way. "Better fale in yure pockets and see, me lad."

"Phwat koind av a man was he?" Larry asked.

"Oi didn't know dhere was more nor one koind," remarked the sailor, in a lazy way.

"Begorra, it is no joke," declared the Limerick boy. "A man was lost off dhe Atlantic dhat same day, and maybe dhis was dhe man. Was he young an' good-lookin'?"

"Dhat he was, me b'y."

"And phwat was his name?"

"We call him Barney; dhat is all Oi know about him."

"And phwere is he now?"
"On shore."

"Ho, ho! Then he came back wi'd ye, did he?"

"He did that same, me b'y. Him and the captain made good friends, and got a bit chummy."

"And phwere is the captain? Be Hivvins, but Oi must dust around and foind out all Oi can about the man. Maybe it is the very one Oi am afther—by the same token it must be!"

"Oi don't doubt it," declared the sailor, whose name was Mike. "We picked him up roight in the wake av the stamship, and he had a lump on his head as big as me fist."

"Dhen it was foul play he had, sure enough!"

"Not a doubt av it; and it was food fur fishes he had been av we hadn't seen him just whin we did, fur he was about played out Oi'm telling ye!"

"And didn't he tell who he was, Mike?"

"He tould nothin', me b'y. He was clane gone whin we hauled him over the rail, and it was three wakes before he knowed a ting at all at all. He took a ragin' fayver, and we thought sure he would go under."

"But he didn't, thank Hivvin!"

"Then he was a relation av yures, me b'y?"

"Not a bit; but Oi have an interest in him, all the same. Ye say the captain is good friends wi'd him?"

"None better, my b'y."

"Thin he must know who he is, Oi imagine."

"No doubt av it; he seen phwatever papers the lad had in his pockets, and he made our ship's doctor watch by him noight and day till he was out av all danger. A brother couldn't have been more a brother to him."

"And he came back a sailor?"

"Thot same he did, and as foine a sailor he is as ever handled a rope."

"He is the very man Oi want to see, Mike, and see him Oi must av Oi have to stay here a month to do it."

"And phwat about him?" asked the sailor. "Now Oi have tould ye phwat Oi had to tell, ye must do the same to make it aven perchune us, d'ye see? Who is he and phwat is he?"

Thereupon Limerick Larry gave his new acquaintance a brief sketch of the matter as he knew it, and he had an eager listener.

"By Saint Patherick, Oi only hope the thaves av the wurreld will get a rope around the two necks av dhem that will yank dhem as high as the fore royal braces above us!"

"Dhat is phwere they will get it, whin we are done wi'd dhem," opined Larry. "In the neck, Oi mane," he added. "And I know av another gossoon that will get it in the same place—but no nade to spake av dhat now. Will ye point out the captain to me whin he comes?"

"Yis, av he gets here before the other—Ha! dhere he is this blessed minute!"

He pointed to a short, heavy man with close-cropped beard who was just coming on board.

"Phwat is his name?" asked Larry.

"Captain Simms."

"All right! Oi will spake wi'd him."

With a wave of the hand to his sailor friend, Larry ran forward and saluted in the manner he had seen observed on the steamship.

"Well, what is it?" asked the captain.

"Captain Simms, Oi would talk wi'd ye about Lawrence Brannagan," explained Larry, boldly.

The captain gave a start of surprise and eyed the Irish lad keenly.

"What do I know about him?" he demanded.

"Dhat same is phwat Oi want to be foinding out, sor," was rejoined.

"Well, then, what do you know about him?"

"Oi know dhat he got on board the Atlantic at Quanestown; dhat a couple av knaves basted him on the head and foired him overboard; dhat yure ship' picked him up and carried him to Australia and back here again; and, av Oi can spake wi'd him, Oi know enough to put the hands av the law upon the whole rascally lot av dhem, sor!"

"Come with me into the cabin, my boy," said the captain, taking hold of Larry's arm. "We will talk about this."

Larry followed willingly, giving sailor Mike a wink as he passed him.

In the cabin the captain gave the lad a chair.

"Now, my boy," said he, "I want you to tell me this whole matter, from the first to the last, and everything you know about it."

"Oi don't know about that, sor," Larry hesitated; "Oi moight do phwat me boss would not care to have me do, sor."

"And who is your boss?"

"Mister Murphy, called the Bowling Grane Detective, sor."

"A detective, eh? And he is looking for Lawrence Brannagan?"

"And he is afther the knaves dhat tried to kill him, by the same token."

"Then you need not hesitate about telling me all, for I am a firm friend of Mr. Brannagan."

"Av which Brannagan?"

"The young man, Lawrence, of course."

"Oi wanted to be sure av dhat. Oi will tell ye, and ye will promise wan thing."

"And what is that?"

"Dhat ye won't go ahead and smash up the affair and give Mister Murphy no show in it at all at all."

"You can rely upon it that we shall be only too glad to fall right in with the detective's plans, and aid him all in our power. He will find that we are in earnest, too."

"Good enough, sor! Oi will spin the whole yarn fur ye, as far as Oi know it mesel'."

And so Limerick Larry did, the captain listening with close attention to every word he had to say, and when he had done, shook the boy by the hand and called him a jewel.

After this important interview Larry set out to find the detective.

CHAPTER XIII.

LARRY'S FIND.

Unhappy Larry!

When he went from the dock he was seen.

Brady and Dunn were looking from a window of their new lodging place, and they chanced to esp yim.

They were on the lookout for another personage, no other than Lawrence Brannagan, and, as fortune would have it, they saw him reach the same dock not a minute after the Limerick lad had gone.

But that by the way. We have called Larry unhappy for an entirely different reason. He went from the dock straight up to Broadway, where his search for Murphy took him in the direction of the flower stand, and there he was just in time to see Nelson waving his hand to Kitty Callaway.

Larry's face blanched.

"Begorra, it is electrocuted Oi shall be!" he cried. "The blood av dhat jack-

ass is bound to be upon the two hands av me! By all the powers, but av Oi do get at him dhere will not be enough av the baboon left to hould an inquist over, sure as me name is Larry! Oi will pulverize him so foine dhat dhere won't be no more nor a grase spot left av him!"

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Sure no longer can Oi stay
Dhe hand av vingince dhat upon
Yure Nelson must descend.
Sure it's not wan bit Oi'm funnin',
But fur him Oi'm goin' gunnin'
And you bet Oi'll take him runnin',
in the place he takes his wind!"

The wild Irish lad could hardly contain himself.

He made a straight line for the flower stand, with the intention of giving Kitty a piece of his mind.

When he caught sight of her sweet face, however, he changed his plan; and, instead, he walked slowly past without even so much as a glance in her direction, to see how that would work.

He had not gone far when he heard: "Larry!"

His heart gave a bound, but he looked around coldly as if to see who had called him.

"Come here," said Kitty, motioning to him.

Larry walked slowly back to the stand, with never a smile. He was in no smiling mood just then, and coldly demanded:

"Phwat do ye be wantin', Miss Callaway?"

"Miss Callaway!"

"So Oi said."

"Ye have always called me Kitty."

"Oi have no roight to do dhat longer; Mister Nelson Phwat-is-it moight not loike it."

There was a depth of irony in the words, which Larry's brogue made all the stronger, and the flower girl was both pained and piqued, as a reader of faces could have told.

"Yes, maybe he might," she rejoined, firing up a little. "I did not think of that."

"And phwat did ye want av me?" asked Larry.

"Have you got a job yet?"

"Oi have."

"Indeed! Oh, I am so glad! What is it, Larry?"

"Call me Mister O'Keen, av ye plaze."

"Oh, ho! It is on your dignity you are, I see! Well, what is it, Mr. O'Keen?"

"Oi am working fur Mister Murphy, and it is a foine job Oi have! Oi am no longer a tramp!"

"Who ever called you a tramp?"

"Nobody; but phwat else was Oi, in dade?"

"Are you mad at me, Larry?"

"Not wan bit; ye have made yure choice perchune Nelson and me, and dhat is dhe ind av it."

"Made my choice—"

"Dhat same ye have. Didn't Oi see him wavin' to ye not a minute ago? By the powers ye can't have us both, and av yure Nelson is in dhen Oi am out! Oi suppose it is Missus Nelson Phwat-is-it ye soon will be."

"And I suppose it is none of your business if I am."

"Roight ye are."

"And why do you call him such a name as that?"

"Because Oi don't know any other name fur him. Oi'll bet it is Buggins, or Muggins, or something loike that."

"I hope it isn't O'Keen."

"So do Oi, on me soul!" Larry emphasized.

"Larry, you are just as mean as you can be."

"And it is yursel' dhat is just a little bit m'aner still nor that."

She was getting the worst of it, and, woman-like, she fired up and sought satisfaction by making a bad matter worse. "Well, trot right along!" she cried, with a toss of her head. "Nelson is not so spiteful, I know; he is a gentleman. He is coming to see me the first day he is off."

Larry felt a chill run up his back, hearing that.

"And then Oi suppose ye will foind out phwat his other name is," he retorted. "Oi suppose ye have it in yure moind dhat it must be Vanranselear, or Vanderybilt, or Knickerbocker, or something loike that; but Oi'll bet ye a dime to a cent that it is plain Smith!"

"And I don't care a dime or a cent if it is plain Black."

"Naythur do Oi."

"And all is at an end between us."

"Yis, av ye have made yure choice, it is. Oi have no regard fur you av you have regard fur that gossoon."

And with that the Limerick boy lifted his hat and walked off down the street, and as he went he sang in a happy-go-lucky fashion that caused passersby to turn a smile upon him:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Be as happy as ye may,
But as fur me Oi'm blasted
And me heart is in dhe soup;
Now fur Nelson Oi am goin',
Me affection to be showin',
And me fist Oi'll be bestowin'
Phwere dhe baby had dhe croop!"

And that was his intention when he set out. He was going down to where the cars turned, and if he met his rival on the way back he intended to mount his car and have it out with him. That was his intention; but reflection caused him to modify his plan.

"Business before pleasure," he said to himself. "Oi must foind Mister Murphy dhe first thing Oi do. Av Oi go and pitch into Nelson Oi will git mesel' into a mess av throuble galore wi'd the police, lose me job, and l'ave young Brannagan in a hole. No, Oi must attend to business first, and dhen dhere will be plenty av toime to square it off with Nelson."

So he went on, with Bowling Green his destination, keeping a lookout for his friend on the way.

Before he reached there he met his rival's car on its way back.

He stopped, and it was hard to resist the temptation to get on board, but he thought of Murphy and the case in hand and repeated the maxim already quoted.

The car came along, and he saw the dudish conductor leaning against the rail on the rear platform. He was about opening a tiny envelope which he held in his hands, and Larry saw him take some money out of it.

The envelope was tossed away, and fell fluttering to the ground.

"By dhe two horns av a dilemma, av it isn't his pay he has got Oi am a false prophet!" Larry cried. "And av dhat is so, sure his name must be on dhe invilup! Oi will have dhat bit av paper or break me neck thrying to get it!"

He thought no more about the car, but darted out into the street, and in a moment had secured the coveted prize.

He was right; it was just what he had taken it to be.

One glance at the name, and he gave a whoop. The name it bore was:

NELSON HOGG.

"By me sowl!" cried Larry, executing a wild Irish step on the sidewalk, "av dhis won't be a crusher dhen Oi dun'no'! Oi am safe; by dhe harp of Tara, Oi am safe enough now! Dhe man dhat could ask a

foine gurrel to marry him wi'd a name loike dhat would have dhe gall av an ox!"

With a broad smile expanding his face Larry put the little envelope carefully away in an inside pocket, and with a lighter step and a lighter heart he went on his way singing:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Oi kin sing ye now a lay,
Fur me heart is bubblin' over,
And me moind is much at rest;
Sure, Oi'm not wan bit on'asy,
Fur Oi have a vision hazy,
Thot you'll hit yure strate-car daisy
Phwere his necktie looks dhe best!"

CHAPTER XIV. DOUBLE SURPRISE.

Limerick Larry was as happy as a lark. He sang verse after verse of his nonsensical coinage, some of which must have provoked a smile for their quaint combinations of brogue in rhyme.

Continuing on his way, he came finally to the building in which Murphy had his office, and he mounted the steps with a run, only to find the office door locked when he reached it.

From there he went to the office of the steamship company, where he made inquiry, but the detective had not lately been seen.

Failing to find him, Larry sauntered up the street again.

He was now eager to see Kitty, to let her know what he had learned, but when he came to her place he found that she had closed up her stand for the day and had gone home.

"Well, it will kape," he said to himself. "It is a hape more important that Oi should foind me boss just now."

He went on, going to all the places where he thought it likely that he might fall in with the detective, but it grew on toward night, and still he had not found him.

He returned then to Murphy's office.

"Oi will thry dhere once more," he decided, "and av Oi don't foind him Oi will have to go back again to dhe ship, fur things are at such a fix now dhat Oi am in it clane up to me chin."

And he was.

"Who would have thought," he mused, "dhat Oi should come to New York to play dhe detective? Begorra, maybe it is fame and forchune Oi shall win in dhis same business before Oi get done wi'd it. By dhe same token, Oi may get it phwere dhe hangman puts dhe rope before Oi get done wi'd dhis case, Oi dun'no'."

When he reached the office he found it still closed.

Murphy was not there, and Larry had no means of knowing where to find him at that hour.

"Oi must give it up," he said to himself. "Not knowin' phwere he boards, Oi am all at say. Oi will l'ave a bit av a note fur him, nevertheless, and tell him phwere to look fur me and phwere young Brannagan is, and dhat will post him av Oi do not fall in wi'd him."

He wrote a note accordingly, and shoved it under the door unfolded, and went away.

"Now fur a bite to ate," he said, "and dhen fur business. By dhe same token, it was down by dhe docks dhe boss said he would look fur me, av he wanted me, so maybe Oi shall fall in wi'd him down dhere. We shall see. Wan thing is certain, since Oi have found out dhe name av dhat fare-ringer me heart is as light as a feather."

Going to a cheap eating house, where he had been in the habit of taking his meals when fortunate enough to be able to get any, he ate a hearty supper, thanks to the money with which Murphy had supplied him.

Having done, the Limerick scion set out for the docks, feeling equal to any emergency.

Meantime, Neal Brady and Hogan Dunn had not been altogether idle, and we must return to them at the time when they espied Larry leaving the dock.

It was Dunn who saw him first, and he immediately called his companion's attention to him. There was no mistaking the identity, for they knew the lad too well to doubt.

"What d'ye suppose he has been doing there?" asked Brady.

"I give it up. Suppose we go down there and take a look around that same dock. Maybe we can find out something."

"Look there!" Brady suddenly exclaimed. "If it isn't that feller!"

Dunn followed the direction, and his face paled again as it had done before on seeing the man.

"There is no doubt about it now," said he. "It is the same feller, and I wish we wur' safe in the wilds of Australia instead of here."

"We are safe enough here, if we can keep out of his sight, and can stave the thing off until our ship sails. If we can do that, then we do not care a continental what happens."

"But, can we do it?"

"We have got to do it."

"That is easy to say. Suppose that lad knows where the feller is, and I am not sure that he don't."

"What of it if he does?"

"Great rocks! Don't you see what of it? He knows us, and he is the only one in New York who can identify young Brannagan!"

"Ha! that is so. I had not thought of that!"

Both were thoughtful, while they watched the young man to see where he was going, and they saw him go on board the Victoria Royal.

"See that!" again exclaimed Brady, excitedly. "He has gone on that ship."

"Well, I know it."

"And it stands to reason that the lad has located him."

"Which means that the detective will know of it soon, and they will be out after us."

"You are right. Lucky we changed when we did."

Had they known that Murphy had shadowed them to their new lodging, and knew perfectly well where they were they would have made the attempt to leave the city in haste.

It was a serious situation as it was.

"We must do the work over again, or we must get out of here. It will never do for us to try to get on board our ship now," averred Brady.

"I see only one way—have a boat and meet the ship down the bay the morning she sails."

"That might be done, but even that is a big risk. I'll tell ye what we should do, if it can be done."

"And what is that?"

"Put that youngster out of the way."

"What is the use if he has done the business for us a'ready?"

"Maybe he hasn't, that is what I am building on, don't you see? And if he hasn't, we can shut his mouth forever."

"But we dare not venture out of here till dark now."

"That is so; but as nobody knows where we are, we can stay right here and watch the dock."

And that was what they decided to do.

When it was thoroughly dark they went down and out upon the street, having disguised themselves as well as possible by changing hats and coats, and they kept their faces in the shadow as much as the lights would permit.

They were loitering along, not knowing what to do, and afraid to venture too near the dock where the Victoria Royal lay, when suddenly they came face to face with Limerick Larry, and, acting with the same impulse at the same moment, both laid hands upon him.

It happened that they then were right close to their lodging, and they dragged the lad into the hallway in a moment.

"Got ye, have we?" hissed Brady.

"And you bet we'll keep ye, too," added Dunn, grimly.

They had a hand covering the lad's mouth, and he was dragged up the stairs, to their room, without making a sound.

And once there, and the door closed, Brady drew an ugly-looking knife and brandished it before the lad's eyes, threatening to cut his throat if he so much as said peep!

They were about to question the youth, when the door opened, and into the room stepped Michael Brannagan, his face dark with anger, and at sight of him the two rascals paled.

How had he learned they were there? And what business had brought him to see them again?

CHAPTER XV.

THE RASCALS LEVANT.

"What did your message mean?" Brannagan demanded. "How did you dare to send for me to come here?"

Brady and Dunn looked at each other in speechless amazement.

"Trapped!" they both ejaculated.

"What do you mean?" Brannagan almost roared.

"We never sent for ye!" declared Brady.

"You lie! What do you call this?" jerking a message from his pocket and shaking it at them.

"What is it?" Brady asked.

"What is it but your message! Come at once, No. — South Street. Avoid other place. Very important."

"We never sent it," again avowed Brady. "That is why we say we are trapped. That cussed detective has led you into this thing, and we are going to be scooped in a bunch."

Brannagan's face was like chalk.

"You think so?" he gasped.

"There is the proof of it," said Dunn, pointing to the message.

"Come!" urged Brady. "There is not a second to lose. We have got to get out of here by a rear way."

"Who is this?" asked Brannagan.

"The whelp that has made all the trouble for us," answered Brady, and he lifted his knife as if with the intention of killing Larry then and there, but both Brannagan and Dunn caught his arm.

"Not here!" warned Brannagan.

"And not that way!" insisted Dunn. "Blood will tell!"

"But he has got to die for this! I'll settle with him somehow," and Brady had murder in his baleful eyes.

"Same as ye settled wi'd young Brannagan, mebby!" muttered Larry. "Ye didn't settle wi'd him good enough, by the same token, whin it is aloive he is at the minute—"

"Shut up!" snarled Brady.

"What's that he says?" asked Brannagan.

"Oi say Lawrence Brannagan is aloive and well, and—"

But Dunn struck him a blow in the face that cut off further speech.

"Have you cheated me?" thundered Brannagan. "Did you not do as you agreed at all? Have you lied to me and taken my money for nothing?"

"I tell you we have got to get out of here," persisted Brady. "We can explain

all this later. It is only a mistake the boy has made, that was all, but he will never make another in this world!"

He and Dunn had seized Limerick Larry again, and dragged him from the room, bidding Brannagan follow, if he valued his liberty.

Down the stairs they hastened, and out by a rear door to the smallest of yards, from which gates opened in two directions, and taking the nearest, they passed through.

Before them was the open rear door of a saloon, and they lost no time in taking refuge there, for the moment, closing the door after them.

"What's to be done now?" whispered Dunn.

"You remember the small boat tied just by the dock on the right," intimated Brady.

"Yes."

"We must make a run for it. There is no other chance, and that is a slim one."

"What about the lad?"

"He will go with us, until we find time to anchor him in the bay."

"And what shall I do?" asked Brannagan, badly frightened.

"Come or stay, just as you please. If you stay here you will be arrested, sure as you live."

"How do you know that?"

"Do you suppose this trap was laid for fun? Ha! hear that!"

A door was heard to slam in the direction from which they had just come, and voices immediately followed.

These, needless to say, were Detective Murphy, Lawrence Brannagan, Captain Simms and policemen.

Brady's conception respecting the decoy message was a right one.

Lawrence Brannagan, going on board the ship soon after Limerick Larry had taken his leave, had heard from Captain Simms the whole story, and they had planned to find the detective and push the matter while the thing was moving. And this was the outcome of it all.

This accounted for the failure of Larry to find his boss.

Brady now made a dash for the street, dragging Larry with him, and Dunn was at his heels.

Brannagan did not tarry, either. Satisfied that his own safety depended upon his sticking to his two rascally tools, he plunged along the hall after Dunn.

Brady reached the door, threw it open, and stepped out, not daring to betray haste in his movements, however, for fear of being nabbed, but he lost no time, even there.

He started across the street, Dunn assisting him with Larry, and Brannagan close behind. They were nearly across when they were discovered by a policeman who was standing before the other house. The officer gave a signal, and dashed after them in all haste.

There was no longer use of caution, so Brady and Dunn made a dash for the small boat, which they gained.

Larry was thrown into the boat, headlong; the two men jumped in after him in almost the same moment, and Brannagan had barely time to follow when they were off, Brady having cut the painter.

By the time the policeman reached the spot, he could just see it near the end of the dock, and in another moment, it had vanished behind the hulls of some vessels.

A few moments later Detective Murphy was on hand, with those with him, and the detective quickly asked:

"Which way did it go?"

"Down stream," was the answer.

"The tide is that way, then?"

"Yes."

"That is enough; that is the way they will go. It will be their object to make distance as fast as possible. We must give them chase."

"If we only had a tug," said the captain of the Victoria Royal.

"We must have a boat," exclaimed Murphy. "I am afraid it will be all up with that lad before we can rescue him. You are sure they had a prisoner, officer?"

"Yes, dead sure—a boy!"

"Come!" cried Murphy, "not a minute to lose. Have you a boat, Captain Simms?"

"Yes; we can get it into the water and manned in less than five minutes. Right this way, sir; lead the way, Lawrence!"

"You bet I will!"

Young Brannagan was all activity, and, in the shortest time imaginable, he was on board the Victoria Royal and ordering one of the boats into the water, and almost by the time the others reached him the boat on the davits was ready for lowering. Down it was run, and sat on the water like a cork.

Into it they got in all haste, except the policeman, and pushed off into the stream.

There was a moon, but dense clouds hid it, which broke only at intervals.

"One thing we can be sure of," said Murphy, as soon as the tide caught the light launch, "they have gone this way, for they would only tire themselves for naught by trying to pull in the other direction."

"But we can never find them," asserted the captain.

"It will not be because we do not try," declared the detective. "Keep nearest the other side, my boys," to the oarsmen. "They will most likely hug that shore."

They were in a dangerous place, with no light on their boat, but they took all the risks, keeping out of the way of moving craft as much as possible and at the same time pulling away with a will whenever the course was clear for them to do so.

And every man of them was on the lookout.

Presently the moon broke through, and for a brief time the river was revealed, almost in brilliancy in every direction.

Far ahead they espied a boat similar to their own, heading for down the bay! They laid their course directly after it, and the launch literally leaped over the waters.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GAME HALF WON.

Meantime, what of the other craft?

As soon as it was out in the stream the two rascals seized the oars, one to row and the other to steer.

Larry had been rendered insensible by his fall into the boat, and Brannagan was sitting in the bow, holding on to the sides for life. He was unused to the water, and was trembling with fear.

"We shall be run down," he complained. "We'll surely be cut in two!"

"We'll get worse nor that if we don't get away from here," growled Brady.

"But we must have a light."

"To blazes with a light!" cried Dunn. "Do you suppose we want to guide them after us?"

The river was rough, and the boat, which was a small one, only a dory, was tossed about like a shell, even if it was quite heavily freighted. And the chief villain of all got down in the very bottom, and there he sat, his teeth almost chattering with terror, while the boat went on through the darkness, threatened every moment with destruction from the larger craft that came near.

Little was said, and after a time Brannagan became a little more accustomed to it, and his fears began to subside; and when, at length, they came to where the river was wider, and the motion of the boat was less, he ventured to look around, and discovered a lantern just under the seat.

He said nothing, but, opening it as soon as he had discovered the combination, he lighted it.

"What are you doing?" demanded Brady, when he saw the light.

"I found this lantern, and I lighted it."

"Well, dowsie it, mighty quick!"

"I'll do as I please about that," answered Brannagan. "Row for your life, or I will put a bullet into you!"

He was master of the situation, so far as the lantern was concerned, and he was a man used to being obeyed, so the lantern remained, and the boat went on with all the speed possible.

It was about this time that Larry came to his senses.

For a moment he could not grasp the situation, but it soon came to him, and he thought hard.

He did not move, thinking that perhaps it would be better not to do so, for, finding that he was free, he might get a chance to jump overboard and thus make his escape.

Once in the water he could defy them, for he was an excellent swimmer. He had done many a long-distance swim in Limerick waters.

The tide with them, the boat had gone at a swift rate, and in a short time the lights of the city were behind.

They had kept to the east shore, and still kept to it as they went further along.

Two or three times the moon had broken through, and each time they had looked to see if they were pursued, but had failed to discover any boat near enough to them to prove that such was the case.

Finally Brady rested on his oars.

"I am about winded, Hogan," he declared. "You will have to take hold and try a pull."

"I was goin' to ask ye," said Dunn, "if I shouldn't do that, but I knowed that every minute meant one, so I waited for you. Give me your place."

They rose to change places, and that was Larry's chance.

With a wild Irish yell he jumped up and made a leap for the side of the boat, but Brady turned and caught him just in time.

In turning, however, he had tripped Dunn, who came down into the bottom of the dory with a crash, and Brannagan, rising up in alarm, lost his balance and went overboard.

He, too, gave a yell as that accident befell him.

As it happened, they were right over a shallow place, and Brannagan went in only to his middle, and with one hand on the boat he held up the lantern and told Brady to kill the boy there and then.

"Beat his brains out!" Brannagan cried, "and fling him to the fishes!"

"And serve you the same, curse you!" roared Dunn. "Why didn't you stay in your place?"

Larry had turned, and was grappling with Brady, and in that moment the moon came out from under a dark mass of cloud and rendered the scene almost as light as day.

Close in to shore, under the dark shadows, was another boat, which they had not discovered.

This one now put out straight toward them.

"Curse ye, let go!" cried Brady.

"Dhat same Oi will, but I've go av me," retorted the stout lad.

"I will murder you, that is what I will do with you, curse you! You are the—"

He loosened one hand to take a better hold, but, in that instant, Larry freed himself from his grasp, and turned a backward summerset overboard into the water and disappeared.

By this time Dunn was righting himself, and he struck Brannagan a blow in the face that made him let go his hold of the boat, and, seizing an oar, Dunn put it into the stern notch and sculled the boat out of reach, when he took the seat and looked for the other oars.

As it happened, all save one had dropped overboard!

"Help! help! Don't leave me here!" cried Brannagan.

"Help yourself!" retorted Brady, with an execration.

Seizing the one oar out of Dunn's hand, he sculled off with it as fast as possible, for just then he caught sight of the ship's launch, and hoped to get far enough away to escape when darkness once more favored them.

Brannagan was yelling at the top of his voice, forgetting everything else save his immediate danger.

"Phwy don't ye swim fur it, Mister Brannagan?" asked Larry. "Av ye can't do dhat it is lost ye are fur certain. Sure dhere is no bottom ten feet from phwere ye are standin', and if ye move ye are a goner!"

This added to the rascal's alarm tenfold.

He bellowed in his terror, calling upon all the saints he had not forgotten to come to his aid.

The saints came not, however, but the pursuing boat did, and it had the lantern, which Brannagan was waving furiously, to guide it to the spot, for the moon was again disappearing.

When the boat came near enough, Larry sang out:

"Ahoy! the boat!"

"Where away?" came the return.

"Starboard quarter, begorra, and good for an hour!"

A laugh was heard, and the boat pulled in his direction, and in a few moments Limerick Larry was safe on board.

No stop was made, but the launch pulled straight to where Brannagan was standing, a helpless prisoner to his fears, and he was seized and lifted on board and made a prisoner in fact.

"Why, how do you do, uncle?" spoke young Brannagan, who had taken the lantern from his hand, now holding it close to the rascal's face. "We meet at last, and in the most unexpected manner, though it is no fault of yours; you did what you could to dispose of me."

"I never did!" cried Brannagan. "I have been doing all in my power to find ye, my boy, and have just got on track of you at last!"

The others laughed heartily at that. It was too plain a case now.

The light was put out, and the boat pulled on out into the bay for some distance, when a stop was called and all listened sharply to catch a sound from the other boat.

But no sound came.

They rowed about for a long time, waiting for the moon to reappear, and when at last it did favor them, the dory was nowhere in sight.

For the time being the rascals had made good their escape, it seemed, but the Bowling Green Detective by no means gave them up. He asked the others to put him ashore on Staten Island and leave him there.

This was done, with a final understanding among them all, and the launch pulled back to the city without the detective.

By midnight Michael Brannagan was an

unwilling guest on board the Victoria Royal, where Limerick Larry was shown all the honors of a royal visitor.

The game had been well won, so far.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STRANGE STREET-WOOING.

Larry was astir early the next morning and trying to do something with his clothes to make himself half presentable.

Much worn before, his night's adventures had about put the finishing touch to his garments, so now they were hardly fit to wear longer. At thought of Kitty, his heart failed him.

"Sure, me name is Dinnis now!" he complained to himself, as he took his clothes down from the rigging, where they had been hung to dry. "Kitty will turn up her purty nose at me, in such rags as these, and maybe dhere will be a chance fur Nelson, even av he is a Hogg."

While thus lamenting, Lawrence Brannagan came on deck.

He asked what was the matter, and, seeing the situation, he bade Larry put on his old clothes just as they were and come on shore with him.

Larry obeyed, and in less than an hour he had undergone a remarkable transformation, for the lad had been fitted out anew from crown to soles, and made by far a finer-looking young man than Nelson Hogg.

And, besides that, he had money in his pocket.

"You have done much for me, my lad," said Lawrence; "let me begin by doing this much for you in return now."

"Begorra, Oi thank ye with all me heart," responded Larry. "Dhey say dhat clothes don't make the man, but, be Hivvins, dhey go about ninety-foive per cent. in dat direction, Oi'm bettin'!"

Soon after that he was proceeding in the direction of Broadway, a smile on his face and feeling a lightness of heart that made him seem as if walking on air.

He strolled along, hands deep in his pockets and his head high, at peace with himself and the whole world, apparently, and as he went along he sang softly:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Sure Oi know you'll not say nay
Whin Oi pop dhe vital quistion
Dhat is burnin' on me tongue;
Fur yure Nelson is not in it,
Wid his name he'd never win it;
Let him thry, and in wan minute
He will get it in dhe lung!"

When he came in sight of the flower-stand, however, his heart stood still because of what he saw there.

It was the conductor's day off, as it happened, and there was Nelson, in his best attire, smiling upon Kitty and whispering simple nothings into her evidently willing ears.

And, in appearance, the conductor was no mean rival. He was dressed in fashion and in the buttonhole of his coat he wore one of the handsomest boutonnieres of Kitty's handsome morning stock. He had on an "out-of-sight" hat, and carried a neat cane.

"Now Oi am in fur it," muttered the Limerick lover. "It will be him and me, and dhe best man will win. Kitty will have to make her choice, and dhere will be no more half-way business about it. Begorra, but he is a sparkler, sure as me name is Larry O'Keen! But, he is a Hogg all dhe same, and dhere is phwere Oi will have him by dhe snout!"

He went forward, softly humming:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Dhere's dhe devil now to pay,
Wi'd me and Nelson fur it,
And dhe best man for to win;
Sure me Oirish blood is bollin',
Fur a foight Oi am just spoilin',
Me tin fingers Oi'd be coillin',
Undernayth dhe bla'guard's chin!"

He reached the stand, and the moment Kitty espied him her face flushed more rosy than he had ever seen it, and she cried:

"Oh! Larry, is it really you?"

"It is mesel', and nobody else," Larry assured.

The conductor looked at him and smiled at his brogue.

"A friend of yours, Miss Callaway?" he asked. "Pray introduce us."

"Why, certainly," assented Kitty. "My friend, Mr. O'Keen, Mr. Nelson; Mr. Nelson, Mr. O'Keen."

"I am pleased to know you, Mr. O'Keen," assured the conductor, offering his hand. "A friend of Miss Callaway's is a friend of mine, every time."

"Begorra, Oi wish Oi could say dhat same," retorted Larry, failing to see the proffered hand. "And av Oi did say it, by the same token Oi would mane it, you can bet on that!"

"What do you mean?" demanded the conductor, flushing.

"Oh, Larry, how can you?" chided Kitty.

"Just phwat Oi say," rejoined Larry. "Whin ye say ye are plased to know me ye loie, fur ye are not plased at all!"

"Have a care, sir," cried the dudish conductor, spurring up like a bantam rooster. "You will find that I am not a man to brook insult, my fine fellow!"

"Do phwat ye plaze wi'd it, dhen," suggested Larry. "We may as well have it out dhe while we are about it. It is you and me fur it, and dhe best man to win, Mister—Mister—Mister—"

"My name is Nelson."

"Nelson phwat?"

"None of your business, sir!"

"Begorra, av Oi had a name dhat Oi was ashamed av Oi wouldn't wear it!"

"Fellow, what do you mean?" now painfully flushed. "Would you insinuate that I am ashamed of my name?"

"It looks loike it, begorra! Kitty, do ye know any other name fur him besides Nelson?"

"No, Larry! but—"

"Be Hivvins, Oi do, dhen! Miss Callaway, let me have dhe pleasure av presenting me detested innimy, Mister Nelson Hogg."

And he brought out the last name with full volume.

"Oh—oh!" screamed Kitty.

As for the conductor, he turned as pale as death, then as red as blood could make him, and his face perspired.

"Deny it av ye can," the boy from Limerick invited. "Dhat is yure name, and Oi have dhe proof av it, and av ye wasn't ashamed av it ye would be wearing av it loike any other daycint man!"

"You mistake," cried Mr. Hogg. "You mispronounce my name," he declared. "It is pronounced Hoag, sir; Hoag—Hoag—Hoag!"

"Dhat don't correspond wi'd dhe spelling av it by any manes," asseverated Larry. "Av H-o-g-g spells Hoag, dhen it is to school Oi will be going again, dhat is all. Hogg it spells, and Hogg it is, and ye can't squale out av it, aythur!"

"What do you know about the spelling of my name?"

Larry thrust his fingers into his vest pocket and drew out the pay envelope.

"Here is dhe invillip in which ye re-saved yure pittance av pay yesterday," he cried, "and av dhis isn't yure name on it dhen begorra it is arrested fur st'aling another man's money ye can be!"

"But I tell you it is not pronounced that way—"

"Oi don't care a copper how ye pronounce it; dhat is phwat it spells. And

now, Kitty, choose perchune us at wanst. It is him or me, and no fooling about it, aythur!"

"Oh! Larry! how can you—"

"Asy enough, begorra! Make yure choice, Oi say! Av ye will marry me, say but dhe wurred; av it is a Hogg ye want to be, say dhat!"

At first their talk had been in low tones, but now Larry was speaking out aloud in his excitement, and passersby were stopping to take in what was being said and learn what it was about.

"But, Larry, this is no time—"

"Be Hivvins, it is now or never wi'd me," reasserted the boy. "Make yure choice, and dhat at wanst!"

There was no way out of it; a crowd was collecting, and with downcast eyes the pretty flower girl stepped beside Larry and slipped her left hand into his right.

The eyes of the wild Irish lad danced with joy, and as Mr. Hogg beat a hasty retreat to hide himself, Larry sang after him, much to that gentleman's discomfiture and greatly to the amusement of all who heard it, the following impromptu lines:

"Sure, Mister Nelson Hogg,
Ye may slink off loike a dog,
Fur purty Kitty Callaway
Has give me her hand fur life.
And av you come foolin' 'round her,
Then, be Hivvins, Oi am bound ter
Give you wi'd me roight a pounder
Phwere dhe butcher sticks dhe knife!"

CHAPTER XVIII. HAPPY ENDING.

Two mornings later the ship upon which Brady and Dunn had engaged passage dropped down the bay.

A tug accompanied her, yet at a distance sufficient to appear as if not doing so, steaming along at a speed about equal to that of the ship, and presently it put straight in to shore.

There Detective Murphy was taken on board, having displayed a signal that had been agreed upon.

"What success?" asked Lawrence Brannagan, immediately.

"The best!" was the answer. "They are in a boat in the lower bay and will signal the ship and get on board."

"We have got it arranged with the captain, as you directed, and everything is in order for their reception. It will be a grand surprise for the knaves."

"As it should be. I am surprised that they have dared to take the risk, for they ought to know we would lay this trap for them."

"No; they think they lost themselves to us that night."

"That must be it."

The tug steamed down the bay, then, and there lay in wait for the ship to come along.

Watching, they saw the ship lie-to and take the two men on board; and when finally it came sailing along the tug steamed in the way and signaled the captain to lie-to again.

This was done, and Murphy and a couple of officers in disguise got on board.

The captain led them straight to where the two rascals were, and both were made prisoners before they could think of offering any resistance, and were taken on board the tug.

They stormed and raved, but it was all of no use, and their declarations of innocence were laughed at.

"Why," said Murphy, "what is the use of your holding out when old Brannagan has made a clean breast of the whole matter? You had better do the same, far as your part in it goes."

And so they did, before the tug reached the city.

They confessed that they had been employed by Brannagan to murder his nephew, and it had been arranged that Lawrence should sail at that particular time. The uncle had engaged passage for him beforehand, and therefore knew the room he would occupy. The two villains concealed themselves in that stateroom, and there pounced upon him. He was struck on the head and the body thrust out through the porthole.

The uncle had arranged it all so cleverly that his hand would not have appeared in it if it all had worked as planned. And only for Loony Larry it might have been a case which Detective Murphy would have found impossible to clear up. But a kind providence had taken a hand in the game, and the plans of the old villain had been upset in the neatest manner.

He and his tools were brought to trial and were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, but old Brannagan was found dead in his cell before he could be taken up the river. The others went up, however, and are up there still.

Instead of the uncle's coming into the riches of the nephew, it worked all the other way, for Lawrence turned out to be Michael's only heir, and he came in for all his property.

Then any wrongs that his relative had done were made right.

Among other things, it was found that he had robbed a former partner, a man named Callaway, of all his means, and this amount was ascertained and restored to the widow, who was living and trying hard to support a large family.

This was the mother of the Kitty Callaway of our story, and so the flower girl disappeared from Broadway, never to be seen there again. She would have disappeared, anyhow, all in due time, as the wife of the Limerick lad, to whom she had plighted her troth that memorable day on the street.

Larry had found a situation and was doing well, but when the Brannagan estate was settled Lawrence set Larry up in business for himself, and the really bright lad prospered almost from the start.

Lawrence returned to Ireland when matters were settled, and there he married the lady of his choice, and there they live to-day.

The claim of Samuel Powers against the rascally old Irishman was honorably adjusted, as was also that of Margaret Hull and many others. Lawrence went away with many a blessing called down upon his head; he had redeemed the honor of the name he bore.

Selim Hedgewood, of the steamship company, gave Detective Murphy much praise for the manner in which he had handled the case and the promptness with which he had cleared up a matter which at first had looked so impossible. His confidence in the Bowling Green Detective took firmer root than ever.

"But I cannot claim all the credit," Murphy insisted.

"Now, that is your modesty, that is all," rejoined the steamship magnate.

"No, it is the truth," declared Murphy. "A good deal of the success in that case was brought about by that wild Irish lad, Larry O'Keen."

"Well, have it your own way," acquiesced the magnate. "We have our own opinions about it." And in support of those opinions, the detective was put upon the pay roll of the company at the regular salary of a nice sum.

In due time there was a happy wedding, when Limerick Larry felt able to assume such responsibilities, and the bride was Kitty Callaway, of course.

It was in truth a grand affair, for Lawrence Brannagan and his wife, with a bouncing little son, came over from Ireland to lend their presence.

By this time Larry had shed much of his wild nature; his brogue had become greatly modified, and he was confessed to be one of the brightest of the rising young business men of the city.

Detective Murphy was his best man, and a lady upon whom he was known to be secretly smiling with favor had been chosen for the bridesmaid. The wedding over, and when Larry had kissed his bride, at the end of the ceremony, he threw decorum to the winds and sang:

"Swate Kitty Callaway,
Oi'm a happy man to-day,
Wid yure beaming smile upon me—
You me wife, me star av hope;
Sure ye are me own forever,
To be separated never;
Just let any one endeavor
To do it, and see av Oi don't paste
him wanst fur luck in the place
phwere the hangman puts the
rope!"

THE END.

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